TRAVELS

BEFORE THE

FLOOD.

AN INTERESTING

ORIENTAL RECORD

OF MEN AND MANNERS IN THE

ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD.

INTERPRETED IN

Fourteen Evening Converſations

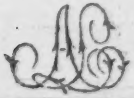
BETWEEN THE

CALIPH OF BAGDAD AND HIS COURT.

Tranſlated from the Arabic.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON Printed

CARLISLE, RE-PRINTED FOR A. LOUDON,

BOOKSELLER, BY GEORGE KLINE, 1797.

TO

THE READER.

THE following account of these Travels will perhaps gratify the curiosity of many inquisitive readers.

IN the year 1638 of the Christian æra, when the Turks, with the loss of 40,000 lives, recaptured Bagdad from the Persians, and plundered the palace of its Caliph, the original of this record was fortunately saved and secreted by an Arab, in whose possession it remained till the middle of the present century, when, either by purchase or by accident, it fell into the hands of a Polish Jew.

THE Consul of an European power that has lately lost its existence as a nation, and groans under the yoke of three criminal and ambitious usurpers, having afterwards bought it for a considerable sum of money, sent it to his ill-fated country, whose PATRIOT KING, disdaining

daining to wear a crown without making the natural and political rights and liberties of his ſubjects its brighteſt jewel, is ſaid to have founded on it many of thoſe ſalutary reforms which a few years ago commanded the admiration of every people that prizes freedom and independence.

If VOLNEY's *Ruins*, SWIFT's *Tale of a Tub*, and other writings of a ſimilar kind, are allowed the merit of inculcating important truths, and conveying inſtruction blended with entertainment; it is humbly preſumed, that the preſent work, replete with wholeſome leſſons to nations and their rulers, will equally make good its claim to public intereſt and patronage.

FROM theſe laudable motives, it now makes its appearance in an Engliſh dreſs; and that it may gain the ſanction of true ENGLISH FEELINGS, is the moſt fervent wiſh of

THE EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING TO

BEN HAFI,

AND THE

ARABIC TRADITIONS.

AFTER the ſevere and active ſages and conquerors who ſucceeded the Great Prophet in the caliphate, there was one whoſe natural love of peace could not but make him find out the ſecret of governing Aſia with undiſturbed eaſe. His Viziers and his favourites clearly demonſtrated to him, that the only reaſon why his predeceſſors had conquered ſuch immenſe tracts of land, and ſacrificed ſo many hundred thouſand lives, was, to render his days tranquil, happy and proſperous. The Caliph never contradicted their arguments; and, had the ſtrength of

his body and the wit of his story-tellers been inexhaustible, he would in all probability have transmigrated to the abode of his fathers, with the reputation of having himself done no good, and no bad; and of having neither prevented that, nor promoted this. Courtiers and priests may prove that these are the best governments. The Caliph, however, feeling his nerves somewhat debilitated by indolence and enjoyment, and the wits who surrounded him having so much drained the store of their marvellous tales as to be obliged to repeat them over again, all those who reigned in his sacred and mighty name, and were strongly leagued together like so many robbers against humanity, now found themselves extremely embarrassed, as the Caliph, who could not bear those stale repititions, and had not hitherto troubled himself with the active concerns of his government, began to ask such questions as, on the part of a man of forty, who had let others reign for him upwards of twenty years, must be deemed very singular. It appeared that he, who had hitherto sat on the throne quite incurious, wished on a sudden to know why he sat upon this throne, and what business he really had in this world? Even thus far can relaxation from

from pleaſure and entertainment bring a monarch !

The Caliph was a man of great piety, a zealous worſhipper of God, and a faithful diſciple of Mahomet his prophet. The only book he knew was the Koran, whoſe words were always ſtreaming in the moſt ſolemn tone from his lips, becauſe its ſpirit dwelt wholly in his heart. The cabal of his Viziers, leſs orthodox than their maſter, knew that he neither lacked genius nor underſtanding, and that the want of reſoluteneſs was his principal defect. They were now under great apprehenſion leſt ſome one of their own junto ſhould be ambitious and faithleſs enough to rouſe entirely that energetic faculty of the mind, that dangerous and half dormant enemy, whom they had hitherto carefully endeavoured to keep under. They ſurely did not fear that the man who had ſo long indulged his body, that his mind ſeemed at times to have conſpired with it, ſhould all at once become an active ruler; but all they dreaded was, that one among them might, by the invention of ſome new juggle, render himſelf ſole maſter of the Sovereign of Aſia. Theſe cares and anxieties laſted a whole month; one Vizier

watched

watched the other; sleep and rest had forsaken them all. Intrigue, baseness, hypocrisy and pride, inflamed by fear, jealousy and envy, acted a farce so comico tragical, that, had it been possible for the Caliph's subjects to look into the heart of their oppressors, it would at least have afforded them some small consolation for their sufferings. *Alas!* the situation of a courtier, whose bark does not scud before the wind of princely favour, or happens in her proud course to strike upon some shoal, is melancholy indeed! and it certainly is a proof of the *innate depravity* of men, if they rejoice at such a *moving* scene. To comfort the *loyal* and *well-disposed*, Hasard, the obscurest and most decisive of all beings in the scale of human affairs, extricated the care worn statesmen from the alarming puzzle they were in. But it was only for a short time; and as the present moment is no where more consulted than at courts, so the Viziers thought already to have gained every thing.

There was at this period loitering about Bagdad one Ben Hasi, whom the people used to nickname the *wise fool*; two qualities of the mind, which, contradictory as they will

appear

appear at first sight, are nevertheless frequently blended together. Perhaps, too, the people of Bagdad called him so, because he chose not to be *wise* in their way, though he might have got more by this method than by his own. All his treasure, all his wealth, was a rare manuscript, written in peculiar characters, and intituled *Travels before the Flood*, from which, for a day's meal or a night's lodging, he would relate something now to one, then to the other. The first Cadi got intelligence from his emissaries and spies, of the singular method in which this man earned his livelihood*.

The first Cadi†, who, by virtue of his official

* *Though the editor of the present work cannot allow the merit of inventing the* police *of* spies *to his contemporaries, yet he may well flatter their vanity with having brought this rough invention of the ancients to the highest pitch of modern perfection, so that it is become a characteristic sign of a* good *and* well-regulated *government.*

† *The* First Cadi *among the Turks is the chief magistrate of the police of the whole empire.*

official capacity, could not but find ſomething ſeditious or treaſonable againſt the Koran or the Caliph in the conduct of the poor *wiſe fool*, ordered him, from prudential motives, to be immediately ſeized and thrown into priſon. Like a true ſtateſman he was well aware, that if this poor fool was really a dangerous perſon, he had put it out of his power to do miſchief, and that if he were found not guilty, he would always have time enough to do him juſtice. A man of ſuch nice penetration, though he lived many centuries back, might alſo have been a uſeful member of adminiſtration in our preſent governments; but we do not preſume, by this remark, to teach our Firſt Cadis what would be their duty in ſuch caſes, ſince their ſagacity has proved how far they *dare* go.

FORTUNATELY for Ben Haſi, the Chief Cadi mentioned him accidentally to the Grand Vizier, who had no ſooner heard the words "*Travels before the Flood*" and a *wiſe fool*, than he ſaid to himſelf: "This fellow will moſt likely draw us out from the perplexity we are in: if he be a fool, and ſtill wiſe, he muſt doubtleſs know how to entertain a monarch that is grown ſomewhat relaxed, without its doing either good or harm."

The Grand Vizier ſaw and heard Ben Hafi, turned over the leaves of his wonderful manuſcript, ſhook his head at the odd and confuſed characters, and ſmiled at him, while the latter ſurveyed his countenance with a cold and ſtern look. The Grand Vizier then rolled up the manuſcript, took it under his arm, beckoned Ben Hafi to follow, ſaying to him by the way: "Hafi, as much fooliſh wiſdom as you pleaſe, but beware of that which is ſerious. The former will fetch you gold and the Grand Vizier's favour, the latter the Caliph's diſpleaſure, as it would be tedious, and perhaps oblige his ſervant at laſt to reward you with a halter."

After this very plain intimation, the Grand Vizier introduced him to the Caliph, to whom he ſhewed the manuſcript, telling him what it contained, and every thing he had heard of the *wiſe fool*.

While the Caliph was carefully examining the manuſcript, Ben Hafi had time enough to obſerve him. His friendly and gentle mein, and his fine and venerable form, won him Ben Hafi's heart, who now conceived ſo many bold thoughts reſpecting the Prince of

Believers,

Believers, as the preſence of the Vizier himſelf could not overawe.—Soon the Caliph aſked him a number of queſtions, ſuch as, "How he came by the manuſcript? In what language it was written? Who was the author of it? How it could eſcape deſtruction by the flood? Whether it were not perhaps a mere fiction? Don't be afraid, Hafi," added his Highneſs, "to confeſs the truth to me, for I have my reaſons to like it ſtill better if it be a fiction." Ben Hafi aſſured the Caliph that the manuſcript contained the truth, and exhibited a genuine picture of the earth and her inhabitants, at the period immediately preceding the flood.

The Caliph. I am afraid this picture of mankind will be as little entertaining as that which they preſent after the flood. But anſwer my queſtions.

Ben Hafi. This wonderful manuſcript has been dug out from the ground of the *old mountain*, deeply buried below a rock, by a ſage of Hindoſtan, many centuries after the deluge. By the inſpiration of a ſuperior ſpirit, this ſage learned to decypher the contents, or ſaid at leaſt he could do it. The manuſcript continued to be hereditary in his family,

family, and always would the father teach his firſt-born the ſenſe of this curious record. In my wanderings through Hindoſtan, I happened to make acquaintance with the perſon who was then in poſſeſſion of the manuſcript, and filched from him the key to the ſecret expreſſion of theſe characters. I left him ſhortly after, and was ſurpriſed to find in the bag in which I carried my proviſions, the rare original of the manuſcript itſelf. Perhaps the good ſage, who found my eagerneſs ſo great, wanted agreeably to ſurpriſe me with this preſent; perhaps, too, fate had decreed that it ſhould forthwith ceaſe to be the ſole and limited property of one man; perhaps fate even willed, that the poor and wandering Ben Hafi ſhould thereby find the term of his miſerable peregrinations at the Caliph's court. Now the characters or ſigns that you ſee here, are ſigns, and no language, or rather a ſenſual demonſtration of objects. He, therefore, who can point out theſe ſigns, and underſtands to divide and combine each of them by three and ſeven, and ſeven by three, and one by three, and three by one, and nine by three, and three by nine, he likewiſe knows the ſignification and ſenſe of the ſigns, be he Arab, Perſian, or Hindoo.

The

The root lies in the odds, and the root's ſpirit in the units.

The Caliph. Enough of this! You had better tell me what the manuſcript contains.

Ben Haſi. I told you already that it contains travels and hiſtories before the flood. They are the travels of Mahal, the brother-in-law of Noah the prophet; or the hiſtory of men, and their rulers, previous to the deluge.

The Caliph. Have not I been telling you once that I cannot bear hiſtories, the true ones I mean? Give me fabulous tales, ſtories! Theſe alone teach wiſdom, convey inſtruction, expoſe not the narrator to be ſuſpected of wiſhing to teach his ſuperiors better, tickle the imagination, and lull one to ſleep. Of tales the hearer may believe what he chooſes; and if you relate ſomething mean of Sultans and the Miniſters their ſervants, we may ſuppoſe it to be the invention of ſome idle fool, or of ſome peeviſh malecontent. So if you wiſh me to hear thoſe travels, you muſt relate them in the ſhape of tales. Then if any thing offends or diſpleaſes me, I may think or ſay, 'Tis nothing but a ſtory!

Be-

Ben Haſi. I will obey your will as far as my genius will allow it. But your highneſs muſt firſt grant me conditions.

The Caliph. Conditions! Who durſt make any but myſelf? Hear then thoſe which I lay down: I ſhall interrupt you as often as I ſhall pleaſe, make my remarks and comments upon all you ſay, ſleep whenever I like, and during my ſleep you ſhall continue your ſtory, which, on my awakening, will give me the advantage to find immediately thoughts before me, that will coſt me no farther trouble than to receive them.

Ben Haſi. I ſubmit, but ſtill inſiſt on my own conditions, ſhould it even make me incur your highneſs's diſpleaſure.

The Caliph. Let me hear them.

Ben Haſi. You will permit me to interweave the travels or tales with as many remarks and comments of my own wiſdom and folly as I ſhall think proper, ſhould they be ever ſo foreign to the ſubject. No philoſopher loves to hear himſelf ſo well as I do; and rather than ſuffer myſelf to be ſilenced, I would be ſtrangled. You will alſo permit

me

me to begin or leave off when I like, and hear my tales to the end, ſhould they preve ever ſo tireſome. If your highneſs does not approve of theſe conditions, I will roll up the manuſcript, and you may diſpoſe of me as you pleaſe.

The Caliph. And doſt not thou fear him, that commands over life and death here?

Ben Hafi. Not I, indeed; I have my particular reaſons for it.

The Caliph. And what are they?

Ben Hafi. I believe, that none but the bad feel themſelves, and continue after this life; that the good ſleep without dreams or recollection; and the ſooner I ſhall reach the region where I ſhall awake no more, where I ſhall forget what I have been, the better it will be.

The Caliph. Thou ſpeakeſt nonſenſe, man: but God is great! " *For by the angels who direct the events of the world only one blaſt of the trumpet ſhall reſound, and the graves ſhall open themſelves, and the unjuſt ſhall call: Alas too is us! the day of judgment is come! Then ſhall the earth be moved from its place,*

the

*the mountains shall be beat in pieces, and vanish in dust. On that day the inevitable hour of judgment shall come. Then the sun shall be folded up, the brilliant stars become extinct, and the heavens be torn. The sea shall boil, the ferocious beasts shall gather into herds, the ten months bearing camel shall not be minded, the souls again be united with the bodies, the tombs open, and the dead come forth into life. Then every one's book shall be opened, and justice be done unto each, according to his doings *."*

Ben Hafi. God is great and just, and therefore I fear nothing.—If you will not grant me these conditions, I put up the manuscript.

The Caliph to the *Grand Vizier.* What kind of a man have you introduced to me?

The Grand Vizier. The people call him the wise fool: but you may boldly grant him what he desires; only one wink from you will strike him dumb.

The

* *All the parts printed in Italics are passages taken from the Koran.*

The Caliph. Well, I grant you all you aſked. The Vizier ſhall give you decent garments, that you may appear before me to-morrow evening with the manuſcript. But hark'ee, I premiſe that it contains nothing that offends the Koran.

Ben Hafi. It will only ſerve to glorify it.

FIRST EVENING.

THE Caliph was reclining on his ſopha: at his feet ſat Maſul, a deaf old eunuch, who having attended his maſter from his earlieſt infancy, the latter could never be without him: facing the Caliph, to the right, ſtood the Grand Vizier in reverential awe: behind this miniſter was the Caliph's firſt phyſician; and at ſome farther diſtance the principal perſonages and ſervants of the court and ſtate, whom in Europe we call lords in waiting, lords of the bed chamber, grooms, penſioners, &c.

Ben Hafi, placed with his manuſcript at a little table, to the left of the Sultan, thrice bowed to his Highneſs in ſolemn gravity, and thus began:

SINCE I am at liberty to relate quite in my own way Mahal's travels before the flood, or rather tales before the flood, as the Lord of believers deſires me to ſtile them, I will premiſe the following three remarks: In

In the first place, as the men and sultanes who will appear in them have all lived before the flood, it cannot be my intention to give offence to any of those who are now living or present here, even should the picture of this or that personage of the *aboriginal* world bear as strong a resemblance to this or that personage after the flood, as if they had sat for it to Mahal. The most ancient families of the East cannot apply any thing of that which shall be related, to themselves; because it is notorious, that, as the ancient world owes its origin only to one man, so does the modern world likewise.

The Caliph. I know what you mean, and command you silence upon it. It is much the best way to leave some things in the dark.—If you were to say for instance, that all of us here, poor deaf Masul not excepted, sprang from *one* and the *same* man, some might take it into their head to think that we are all of equal pedigree: now this would set numbers agog, and whom would it avail, pray?

Ben Hafi. The philosopher, my Lord! But remember our agreement, and do not turn a robber upon poor Ben Hafi. This remark belongs

belongs to me, and nobody ſhall take it from me, not even your Highneſs, that commands millions. Thoughts are a property to which omnipotence itſelf forbears to make pretenſion, ſince it breathed a thinking ſpirit into man's body.

Ben Hafi ſpoke this in ſuch ſolemn earneſt, that all preſent looked at one another, ſeeming to aſk how theſe words would be received: but the Caliph ſaid to him: *Peace be with thee!* and bid him go on.

Ben Hafi. A few days ago I met a barber on the river Tygris, who had, like me, overrun the wide world, and was then returning home. I aſked him how matters went abroad, and he anſwered: "Much the ſame, brother, as among us." This is my ſecond remark: and ſome wit, at the concluſion of Mahal's travels, may perhaps ſay: "It was then as it now is."

The Caliph. O the tattler! Begin your tales, or I ſhall fall aſleep.

Ben Hafi. Lord of believers, remember our conditions, and hear my third remark: Though the flood has waſhed away all the

weeds of the old world, yet there ſtill remained, as you will have obſerved, here and there ſome ſeeds of them in the earth, and nothing but the fire will probably purge it entirely ſome day.

The Caliph. Then all will be believers!

Ben Haſi. I'll now begin:

No ſooner had a few men begun to breathe on this lump of earth, than they ſeparated into two claſſes, the good and the bad: and what might the leaſt have been expected of beings who had ſeen their creator with their eyes, and heard him with their ears, the good ſoon aſſociated with the bad, and proceeded ſo far at laſt, as to outdo theſe in wickedneſs and degeneracy.

The Caliph. A moment, Ben Haſi! How comes it that men are now-a-days ſo wicked, while their race is turned grey with age, and was before the flood like a tender ſuckling at the breaſt of its nurſe? Why is there more of the bad than of the good?

The Grand Vizier. This ariſes from the evil innate in man; their race ought therefore to be ruled with an iron ſceptre.

The

The Caliph. I know your maxim, Vizier; but I want Ben Hafi to anſwer me.

Ben Hafi. If you want a definite anſwer, aſk the Prophet and the interpreters of the holy book; they have a reply to every queſtion.

The Caliph. So it is. God is great, and this is one of his ſecrets. "*He ſaid to the angels: I will put in man a repreſentative upon the earth! They anſwer: Will you put one on the earth, that he ſhall do bad on it, and ſhed blood? Yet we worſhip and praiſe thee. God ſaid: Verily I know that which is hidden from you.*"

Ben Hafi. And this ſolves the queſtion — Cain ſlew his pious brother Abel; God drove the murderer into miſery; he fled from the mountain of innocence into the vallies, and ſettled there. Adam begat a ſon, and called his name Seth. The generation of Seth lived upon the old mountain, remained faithful to the Lord, lived in ſimplicity and innocence, and fed on the fruits of the earth and the milk of their flocks. For this the Lord was pleaſed with them, and called them his children. There were neither ſages, artiſts, judges, nor ſultans among them; every

every one cared only for what was moſt neceſſary; none reaſoned about his being; and each was his own judge and ſultan, becauſe he acted in the true ſpirit of man.

The Caliph. I know very well that people may live without doing any thing but eat, drink and ſleep; but how they can live without ſultans and judges, or how a man ſhould at once be ſultan and ſubject to himſelf, is what I cannot conceive. Say what you pleaſe, their life cannot have been a very pleaſant one; and I foreſee, that for this very reaſon it cannot have been of long duration.

Ben Haſi. If the deſcendants of Seth increaſed in the mountains, thoſe of Cain multiplied much more in the vallies, which they ſoon rendered flouriſhing by their ſkill and induſtry. Cain laid the firſt foundation of the evil, by introducing property. By the *mine* and *thine*, that fratricide dedicated the earth and its produce to violence and rapine, and its tenants to murder. He built dwellings, appointed judges, and aſſigned to man for his food the fleſh and blood of the animals, his half-kin. His ſucceſſors went farther; they tore the ores from the bowels of the earth,

built

built cities, collected in thronged masses, forced the earth to return seeds an hundred fold, broke the steed, navigated the waters, and animated with their breath and fingers, the metal, the wood and the entrails of the animals to make them resound in voluptuous and harmonious tones. The arts, whose mother was want, were soon succeeded by the inventions of luxury; and soon the too artful understanding created a toy for fancy, and this toy was called *knowledge*. Seth's offspring looked down from the mountain into the smiling vallies, and saw the rich fields, the perfuming and shady gardens, the thick and cool groves, the glassy lakes and the serpentine rivers, the cities and their splendid towers. They beheld the inhabitants roving through the meads, walking in the gardens and groves, fly on the back of the swift steed, and glide on the water's surface in full sail. By and by they approached timidly the prodigies they had so long gazed at, heard from afar the magic sounds of their music, their merry shouts, and the sweet voluptuous songs of the daughters of Cain. Attracted by the magic images and sounds, they stole nearer. They viewed the charming daughters of the vallies painted and embellished by the artist's

artiſt's inventive hand, taught by the deſire of pleaſing, to trip in luxurious circles, with meaſured ſtep, at the ſoft fluttering of the flutes, at the clear ſound of the cymbals, and the ſtill ſweeter melodies of their companions. Many of the children of Seth thus forgot to return; others went back to the old mountain, and, having imbibed the dangerous poiſon into their minds, painted in words of fire what they had ſeen. But what operated more than words upon the aſtoniſhed hearers, was the glowing deſire which ſparkled in the eyes of the narrators, and the diſguſt and reluctance with which they ſurveyed every thing around them. They compared their ſituation with that of the inhabitants of the vallies, till they found the former quite inſupportable.—The poſterity of Seth then mixed with the deſcendants of the fratricide Cain; and of this mixture of the children of God with the children of the fleſh, or of innocence with knowledge and luxury, there ſprang the mighty men of the earth, her tyrants and her deſpoilers. Thus, Lord of believers, did in the firſt days of the world cultivation devour innocence.

The Caliph. I am ſorry for it; but ſuppoſe this had not happened, how would it be then?

Ben Hafi. We ſtill ſhould live in the ſimplicity of our hearts, and poor Ben Hafi would have no travels before the flood to recount as tales, becauſe there would either have been no flood at all, or nothing at leaſt would have happened before it worth relating.

The Caliph. Then, ſince it happened, it muſt have been, and ſince it has been, God would have it, and God is great! As a pious man, I could wiſh it had not been, and we ſhould ſtill live in innocence. But if I conſider that there would be nothing of all thoſe things which now give me delight, and that, on a footing with the leaſt of my ſlaves, I ſhould be obliged to wander upon a mountain without houſe or ſhelter, and to browſe graſs and herbs like the goat—I am of a different opinion What is your ſentiment of ignorance and knowledge?

Ben Hafi. This queſtion is too intricate and too momentous for me to anſwer. All I know is this: I have ſeen rough ſimplicity walk about in flaky ſkins, and refined crime ruſtle in ſilks; what was between them was not much better than any other medium.—But I muſt proceed—

In the year one thouſand five hundred and ſeventy-five after the creation, there lived only one Muſſulman with his family upon the old mountain.

The Caliph. A Muſſulman before the flood! hey?

Ben Hafi. He was one in ſpirit! Did not Noah believe in a God, and does not Mahomet, his apoſtle, call him his prophet? This Noah was the ſecond father of mortal men. The deſcendants of Seth gradually went down into the vallies, ſcattered eaſt, weſt, ſouth and north, through the country, and built cities and villages. They ſoon forgot God, committed ſin, and trembled under the tyrants whom Cain's ſons begat with their daughters, and whom they raiſed maſters and judges above them. As the mighty men now felt their ſtrength and power, raged, and became conſtantly more formidable by terror, a voice was heard from a dark cavern: "That no one ſhould reſiſt the mighty, becauſe the ſons of God, the protectors of men, who ſpring from the Lord, had begotten them, inflamed with the beauty of the daughters of Seth, and inſtructed the mothers in the ſecret arts, by which

which their ſons held the reins of government." The mighty of the earth found this ſaying ſubſervient to their ends; they now called themſelves ſons of the angels, and ſaid aloud: "Our mighty fathers have granted us ſpirit, underſtanding, power and enchantment, to fill their places, in guiding, protecting and governing mankind." The fools who had forſaken God and true wiſdom, gave credit to the words of their rulers, who took advantage of their ſillineſs, according to their heart's pleaſure, which knows no bounds if there be no fear to control it.

The Grand Vizier caſt a ſignificant look on Ben Hafi, and was about to ſpeak, when the Caliph got the ſtart of him.

The Caliph. Very true, Ben Hafi; this is no tale, but the beſt thing I heard come from thy mouth. I feel all this in myſelf. Chamberlain, bring the wiſe fool a thouſand golden *derhems*, he ſhall take them home with him. Tell me, do not I guide and rule all Aſia? Is it the mere work of mortals, that I who am born like you, not a bit wiſer or ſtronger than yourſelves, ſhould without trouble keep in order ſo immenſe, ſo different minded and

malicious a multitude, that each of you does what I will, and is convinced that none but me dares will? And whence comes it, that I always will that which is beſt and the moſt ſalutary, and that only men of your kind corrupt what I plan? It comes from God, who knows that all flows pure and worthy of my origin from my devoted heart, and that the hands of my ſlaves alone can pollute it.

None of theſe preſent had any objection to urge to the Sultan's argument; and the Grand Vizier ſeemed to be reverentially impreſſed with its force. Ben Hafi, looking at his Highneſs with amazement, and thanking him for the *derhems*, continued:

Noah, his ſons and daughters never turned their eyes to the ſeducing vallies; the only one of his family, who looked down curious and inquiſitive, was Mahal, his brother in-law. This Mahal was one of thoſe people, who are not ſatisfied that they exiſt and live happy, but who alſo want to know why, to what end they exiſt, and whether they are happy in the right manner, or may become happier and better ſtill in another way. He was alſo of a violent, peeviſh and obſtinate temper

temper, and bore in his bosom the seeds of doubts, which were the more tormenting to him, since he was equally deficient in bright intellect, and in the true faith that consists in entire resignation. To him it appeared very strange, that old Noah should thus clamber and shift about upon a mountain, timidly shunning and secluding himself from all the rest of human kind. Did he ask Noah why he did so, he would answer him: "Such is the will of the God of our fathers. Those have forgotten him, and should we forsake him, too, and none of this mortal race be his adherent?"

The more decisive such an answer must appear, the less will it satisfy the curious enquirer. The first transient thought respecting the difference between Noah's family and the inhabitants of the vallies had rendered Mahal unsusceptible of pure happiness. Now one thought engendered another, and he fared no better than all reasoners; he began with soft and timorous doubts, and terminated in murmurs and dispiritedness. He had heard a great deal of the inhabitants of the cities; the fame of their mighty men and their exploits had also reached his ears; he thought them huge

huge giants, and reflected upon their deeds in awful admiration.

One day he said to his brother-in-law: "I am tired of living here; the thorn of disquietude has pricked my heart, and I cannot extract it. All is uniform here, and I taste as little relish of life as our forefathers, that sleep yonder deep in the earth. Nor have I more knowledge than the sheep which I drive to the pasture ground. I will descend to our brothers in the vallies, and learn the wisdom of men. I will see with my own eyes those mighty giants, those sons of God, whom the mighty of the heavens have begotten with the daughters of our blood. I long to witness how they govern the earth and command mankind that dwell on it."

Noah was wroth and spake: Fool! the thorn that sticks in thy heart is the lust after flesh, which thyself has brought forth! Go and follow it, and come back with repentance, if thou shalt not be equal unto them whose wisdom thou coveteſt.——But why dost thou blaspheme God before me, and the powers he has given to guide and protect men? The mighty whom thou calleſt giants

and

and ſons of God, are men like others; their might and ſtrength conſiſt in their cunning and wickedneſs, and in the corruption of thoſe over whom they now rule by their own power. The offſpring of the fratricide begat them with the daughters of our fathers; becauſe, when theſe approached men, they learned all their turbulent ſpirit had invented, became like them, and forſook God; and becauſe their fathers were once called children of God, becauſe they were ſuch by their piety, they invented the raſh words which now miſlead thee."

MAHAL returned: "Abuſe me not, brother, in thine ire! Man could not give to himſelf this inventive ſpirit, nor can he exceed his powers. The lion and the bear are ſtrong, the horſe and the mountain goat fleet, and man is ingenious. What I hear and ſee from afar, proves to me that the mighty of the earth muſt be ſons of God and giants. I ſee the plain covered with their numberleſs dwellings, I ſee them fly on ſtrong ſteeds with the velocity of the wind. Often have I heard ſounds enter my liſtening ear, that made my heart vibrate and yearn, that melted and elevated it. They have ſubdued all; them

obey the hard earth, the flowing water, and the inconſtant air, with all they bear and ſupport. Yes, the mighty muſt be giants, armed with the force of the ſtorm. How could they elſe perform ſuch grand, prodigious achievements? and how ſhould the reſt, were they equal to them, bear their power? I long to ſee their life, and to learn if God is among them: and if he be, why ſhould we live parted from thoſe that are of the ſame blood as ourſelves?"

NOAH, dreading leſt the bold language of his brother in-law ſhould poiſon the minds of his ſons and daughters, left Mahal, who ſoon after deſcended from the mountain with Milka, his fair daughter, and remained at its foot. Here he ſtaid for ſome days concealed in a cavern, as the cloſer view of the city of Enoch, which Cain had founded, bewildered and overawed his ſpirits. In the third night, he was rouſed from his ſleep by the trotting and neighing of horſes. The blaze of torches ſuddenly illumined his cavern; a troop of men armed with ſwords and lances ruſhed in, ſearched every part of the hole, ſaw his blooming daughter, ſeized her, and diſappeared with their booty.

MAHAL

MAHAL, half overwhelmed with grief and despair, tore his garments and pulled out the hair of his head. In his fright he hastened back upon the old mountain, and murmured in his mind: "Lord, why didst thou suffer this? Why didst thou give birth to the mighty?"

WHEN Mahal overlooked the plain at the return of light, his mind was gloomier than the night, his heart swelled with resentment, his thoughts multiplied more and more, and multiplicity increased their confusion. He threw himself upon the ground beneath the shade of a cypress, grumbled and complained. The next day he accosted Noah in deep dejection, and related with bitterness the disaster that had befallen him.

NOAH replied: "Thus hast thou known the mighty of the earth, and the Lord has chastised thee." "Alas," quoth Mahal, "what has the damsel done, to let her fall into the hands of the mighty? What wretched consolation is this, brother! Do not the mighty live before his countenance, like us? Do not they do as their hearts desire, and are great in power and authority? Does he not protect them, and oblige us to hide ourselves from their face?"

MAHAL

Mahal continued to murmur. When twilight came, a ruſtling was heard in the tops of the trees, and there was felt a gentle ſhaking of the earth. Noah exclaimed: "The Lord is walking on the mountain!" He then fell down, and worſhipped. But Mahal did not proſtrate himſelf, and his mind remained gloomy, as the voice of the Lord called out: "Why quarrel ye, men of the mountain?"—"Lord," cried Noah, "forgive me and him! We quarrel for the ſake of thoſe who live in the cities: teach him and me!"

And the Lord's voice reſounded ſtronger: "Shall I teach him whom I have ſo formed that he may be his own teacher? Have I not put a ſpirit over him to be his guard and judge, whom he cannot benumb or belie? Have I not formed his tongue to ſpeak, that he may give life to his thoughts? Have I not done every thing in his behalf, by teaching him to diſtinguiſh himſelf from all that ſurrounds him, that he might not take himſelf to be all one and the ſame with that which ſurrounds him? Have I not thereby connected him with me? But the race of men has forſaken me, and is ripening faſt unto deſtruction. Behold, Noah, thy very brother is become a fool. Men will no longer be guid-

ed

ed by my ſpirit; they live after the ſenſes of their fleſh. They form and create now with their hands and their mind, and deem themſelves gods. They want to know all; every one purſues enjoyment, fame and preſumption, idols, whom they have generated with luſt and pride. I created them all and made them born equal, but they have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by ranks, and the great among the people believe themſelves better born. Who is great before me? Tyrants now govern mankind by terror, and mankind tremble before the ſon of the duſt, who arrogantly ſays he holds his power from me. Who is mighty before me? All their imaginations and efforts are evil: the ſuckling learns it from the old ones, and grows up to do, and ſuffer evil. They feed on the blood and fleſh of the living, and murder one another from ambition and covetouſneſs. Truly it repents me now that I have made man. The earth is horrid to me, it is covered with blood. Yet I will ſtill give a ſhort reſpite to men, to ſee if they return to the ſimple and innocent courſe of life, which Noah my ſon leads.—If they do not return to me, I will deſtroy from off the earth both man and beaſt, and the creeping thing, and the fowls in the air."

NOAH was silent, and worshipped. And Mahal said: "Pardon me, if I dare speak as the spirit prompts me which thou hast implanted into my heart. It repenteth thee to have made men! Thou wilt destroy them all with the guiltless animals. Yet they all are thy work, and not their own! If they be corrupt, why dost thou not mend them by words, signs, or deed? O Lord, why hast thou made men so that it should repent thee to have made them?"

The Caliph. A bold, rash question! My angel*, make me quickly forget it. But what did God answer?

Ben Hafi. He was silent, and a dark cloud covered, for a moment, his bright countenance.

The Caliph. Had your foolish Mahal dared to ask me any question why I did so or so, he should not have got off so easily.

Ben Hafi. You are only a ruler in the flesh; and if the Lord were of the same mind as the majority

* *The Mahometans believe, that two guardian angels or genii are always placed on each side of a man, and relieved by others every day.*

majority of our ſultans and judges, it would go very badly with the ſultans, ſheiks, judges, viziers, nay with the philoſophers themſelves. I ſhould then hardly have travels before the flood to relate to your Highneſs.

The Caliph. I ſaid more than I meant.—But God is great!

Ben Hafi. And the Lord ſpake again unto Noah: "My ſon Noah! Thy brother Mahal loathes the peace of innocence, his heart has ceaſed to be pure and ſimple, and he covets the wiſdom of men. Let him deſcend among them, learn their wiſdom, diſcover the ſource of their wickedneſs and arrogance, and judge between me and them, and between himſelf, me, and them. Perhaps, ſince he is ſo eager to cenſure, he may convert them. Let Mahal go among them, for he can no longer live among the innocent; and this is the firſt ſad gain which the enquirer earns. Go, Mahal! as far as men inhabit the earth, and pollute it with horrors. Mark, by means of the characters which they will teach thee, all thou ſhalt ſee, hear, feel, do, think, and ſpeak; what their counſellors deliberate, what their rulers perform, and their ſages ſay. The more fooliſh they are, the wiſer do they think themſelves.

themſelves. Then return to this ſpot, read what thou haſt noted down, and I will aſk thee what they deſerve, and what is the cauſe of thy and their folly."

MAHAL now felt himſelf in a lethargy of tormenting darkneſs. Noah returned to his family, and ſlept the gentle ſleep of peace, which I wiſh you likewiſe, Prince of Believers, for your patient hearing of my introduction to Mahal's travels.

BEN HAFI now rolled up his manuſcript, and the Caliph diſmiſſed him, expreſſing his hopes, that his next night's tale would be more entertaining.

THE Grand Vizier, who had hitherto liſtened to Hafi with great attention, and thought himſelf often ſmartly hit off, was glad to find that the Caliph took all in good part. He reſolved to be more watchful over the narrator; and, ſhould he be unable to attend, to appoint a liſtener that ſhould be qualified to feel the right ſenſe of the tales. That this was a prudent reſolution, none will doubt who knows the conſequences that may ariſe from the manner in which a tale may be told at court.

SECOND

SECOND EVENING.

BEN HAFI appeared at the hour appointed, unrolled his manuſcript, and began:

MAHAL, awaking from his diſturbed and tormenting ſleep, took a ſullen and unfriendly leave of Noah, and haſtened down the mountain. He was a man of a tall and ſtately form, and juſt in the full vigour of ſerious manhood. His copious black beard curled itſelf in locks about his round chin, his cheeks wore the bloom of roſy health, and his fiery eyes ſparkled lively and boldly below their fair-drawn arches. He that had ſeen him would have ſaid, that rocky obſtinacy formed his wrinkling front; but what particularly diſtinguiſhed him in the countries through which he roamed, was his bold energetic rawneſs, and the novelty and oddities of his conduct.

The Caliph. I ſuppoſe he was an oddity in his behaviour to princes, becauſe thoſe things

 are

are not learnt in the mountains. Don't I guess right?

Ben Hafi. If Mahal, please your highness, learns but this, he will cease to be an oddity in every thing. He was an oddity to dissimulation; and to men that live in society, to whom this art is become second nature, there cannot be a more ludicrous and diverting phenomenon than a man who does not know how to live in their way.

The Caliph. Now I understand you. He was a raw bumpkin. Among the Turks of my life-guards there are many such awkward and rustic fellows.—Proceed

Ben Hafi. The following day Mahal ventured to preambulate the fields covered with ripening seeds; but he still passed warily by the scattered rural habitations. He spent the night in a thick wood, awoke amidst the singing of birds, and the soft breezes of the morning winds. Soon his looks explored the wood, when he suddenly discovered, among a circle of trees, upon an eminence, a being of a dazzling white. His spirit was awed, he believed it was one of the mighty who governed the wood and the scattered cots, and he was going to take flight, when curiosi-

ty

ty arreſted his ſteps. He now attempted to look oftener and longer at his object; and perceiving at laſt, that the dazzling white being would not ſtir, and continued always in the ſame attitude, he gradually ſtole nearer, walking cautiouſly on his toes, for fear of rouſing the being from its meditations, making it perceive, grow angry at, and perhaps puniſh him. He took his ſtation behind a buſh, and watched. It was with aſtoniſhment he obſerved the birds flutter about the being, and ſome of them alight upon different parts of its body. The deſire of recognizing it now drove him forward; he haſtened with a quick pace towards the object, and ſtood ſuddenly and almoſt motionleſs, with ſtaring looks, with a beating heart, and his reſpiration half obſtructed, before a being of his own kind, only taller, quite naked, and of a dazzling white. The fulneſs of its boſom, and the charming ſoftneſs of its ſmile, made him take it for a woman; and believing ſhe ſmiled at him, his reſpiration grew free again, his limbs ceaſed to be benumbed, and quaking fear was changed into agreeable ſurpriſe. His alarms were not however done away entirely; for the figure being ſo much elevated above him, he thought, where there are tall

women there must be men much taller, and surely this must be one of the daughters of the mighty of heaven. He now cast humble and supplicant looks upon the gently smiling female, stammered at last a few faltering words, and told her with confidence whence he came and what he sought. The figure neither changed mein or posture. Mahal stood quite perplexed, and began to pause: "It is a being of my kind," said he at last, "only taller; and though its flesh be whiter than mine, it still is flesh. All its limbs are shaped like mine. Its eyes speak, its mouth lives, and its lips are open for conversation. They are actually speaking, but only I can't perceive the sounds of the words. Yes, it is a being like me; and since it favours me with such amiable smiles, I will approach it, and touch its knees, with prayers."

He now stretched forth his hand—

The Caliph. O the fool! He ought to have done this long ago, and he would immediately have felt of what stuff the thing was made. Shall I now tell you what it was that outwitted this Mahal?

It may be easily conceived that all the courtiers,

courtiers, except Ben Hafi, ſolicited the Caliph to explain.

The Caliph. Why, it was a ſtatue; and I'm afraid we are got among idolaters. I tell you more, the ſtatue was of white marble, and repreſented the ſultaneſs of the country.

THE whole court, except the wiſe fool, praiſed and admired the Caliph's ingenuity and penetration.

Ben Hafi. Mahal put forth his hand, felt a cold body, and ſhrunk back with ſuch trepidation as the ſhepherd muſt feel, who, graſping his crook, feels a ſerpent entwine his arm in lieu of it. He uttered a ſhriek: "The being is dead!"

The Caliph. O the blockhead! Don't he perceive yet, that it is marble? A pretty chap indeed, to write travels for the Lord!

Ben Hafi. As he wanted that quality for which your highneſs is ſo much praiſed, he would have remained in his aſtoniſhment much longer, had not the approach of muſic, vocal and inſtrumental, extricated him from it. A great number of young men and vir-

gins walked two by two, into the circus formed by the trees, laid hold of each other's hands, and danced in close rows about the being, to the sound of music and song.—— They then chanted with one voice a solemn hymn, and laid down their garlands at the feet of the sweet smiling figure. Mahal stood as immoveable within the circle, as the statue upon its pedestal. The graceful melody of the gay, blooming and fine dreſt female singers and dancers had enraptured his ears, and fascinated his heart. When they had done singing, the whole youthful troop thronged near their astonished spectator. They asked him who he was, and he answered their questions. A joyful welcome, intermixed with derision of the fools on the old mountain and with lively pictures of the happiness of the vallies, next ensued. The damsels played with their tender white fingers among the black curls of his beard, and stroked his ruddy cheeks, but still his mind was so lost in amazement at and occupied with the being that stood before him, and to whom the sprightly band had paid such homage, that his first enquiries were entirely concerning it. The dimpled damsels told him: "that it was an image, representing Love, to whom they had just-

juſt ſacrificed." "An image," cried Mahal, "an image?"—"Yes, an image of white ſtone: only touch it." Some of the females jocoſely led him to the ſtatue. He touched it, and aſked with increaſed ſurpriſe, "Stone? What ſtone? How did it come? Did it come like the reſt of the ſtones? Like theſe trees here? Is it produced by the earth, or did it drop from the clouds?"—They anſwered him: "It is formed by the hands of man, ſhaped from rough dead ſtone, and lives only in the expreſſion, in the ſpirit of the expreſſion which the genius of the artiſt breathed into it by the creation of his hands. Behold here is the young man that created it!" This diſcovery increaſed Mahal's confuſion. He would alternately look upon the image, and the young man, examine and feel the latter's hands and ſay in his heart: "Is this wonderful being the work of theſe hands? Then the inhabitants of the vallies may juſtly call themſelves gods, becauſe they create from dead ſtone creatures who reſemble them, and appear ſtouter and taller than themſelves! It is certainly the work of the mighty of heaven; who once cohabited with their mothers, and taught them magic. And what," exclaimed he, "does this figure repreſent?"—Love.—"What is Love?"

The youths looked at the girls, and the girls at the youths. One of the young men accoſted Mahal, and ſaid: "Follow us to our dwellings, and thou ſhalt ſee and know what love is. It is the ſixth ſenſe, which we have created ourſelves, and extorted by art. It is the ſpirit of ſociety, the reliſh of life, the union of hearts to enjoyment, by a play of the underſtanding which diſtinguiſhes us from the brute animals and thy brothers on the old mountain. It is the mother of ſweet bliſs and ſweet pain."

They now made their diſciple walk in the middle of them, and retired with ſhouts and wanton ſports to the adjacent dwellings. The old ones gave him a hearty reception, and he found in all he ſaw and heard, ſo much matter for ſurpriſe and admiration, that he remained like a lifeleſs machine among his hoſts.—— Blooming virgins conducted him to the bath, waſhed, rubbed and anointed him, perfumed his beard, and made him put on a fine and light garment. Mahal now ſaid in his heart:

"Lord! do theſe fair, good and friendly creatures deſerve thy wrath, and the deſtruction with which thou has threatened them?

Sea,

See, how they take pains to pleaſe me and do me good, yet I have done nothing to merit ſuch kindneſs! How fair are their women! how ſoft and white their hands! how mild and inviting their looks! Certainly they cannot but be good."

With this conviction Mahal entered the hall, where a large banquet was prepared.—The fumes of the viands entered his noſtrils, and tickled his palate. His deportment and queſtions at table entertained all the gueſts, and every thing he taſted, obſerved and felt, ſtrengthened him in the belief that God was bounteous to theſe briſk, gay and good creatures. As he went to bed, he was informed, that the next morning a feaſt would be celebrated in the wood, as the ſublime and mighty ſultan of the city of Enoch was going to take another wife. Songs and muſic awoke him from his ſlumber, which was taken up with a ſeries of pleaſant and wonderful appearances and images. The juvenile groups repaired to the ſhades of the wood, ate and drank, and gave a looſe to their joy. Soon the old aſſociated and joined with the young, and theſe again with the old, in poſtures and attitudes over which I will draw a veil, ſince I am

now

now to ſpeak to your Highneſs's reaſon, but not to ſtimulate your ſenſes.

The Caliph. Then thy tales will be ſo much the worſe.

Ben Haſi. The ſun had not yet ſunk beneath the weſtern horizon, when all this gaiety was at an end. The wild clamours of diſcord reſounded from a neighbouring arbour; jealouſy had divided two rivals.—Mahal ran to witneſs the novelty of the ſcene; he heard the youths quarrel about a virgin, and make uſe of ſuch words as formed a ſtrange contraſt with thoſe he had hitherto heard. The ſtronger of the two had cloſely graſped the virgin, and wanted to carry her into the thicket; but the weaker, following him, from behind ran his ſword through his body. The wounded youth fell: the virgin fled, and told thoſe who approached of the foul deed. Every body fled, and Mahal alone remained about the wounded youth, quite loſt in meditation. He could not reconcile the pleaſures of the day and the gentleneſs of thoſe beings with the ſcene before him. At the ſight of the blood, and the groans of the dying youth, he deeply remembered

bered the words of the Lord: "The earth is horrid to me; it is covered with blood!" With pity he gazed at the expiring victim, drew the sword out of the wound, and beheld with awful and terrific emotion the instrument of murder. The youth soon gave up the ghost; and Mahal shivered with fear, on seeing the distortion of his features and the deadly paleness that covered his face.

MEANWHILE a host of armed men rushed upon Mahal, wrung the blood stained sword out of his hands, bound and carried him into the city. He was there shut up in a dark dungeon, and left all night to his own meditations.

BEN HAFI now rolled up his manuscript, and rose to withdraw.

The Caliph. I could lay a wager, they have taken up poor Mahal as the murderer of the young man; and in this case he may get but badly off, being both a stranger and such a blockhead.

THIRD

THIRD EVENING.

BEN HAFI was punctual to the minute, and thus continued his narrative.

LAST night, Lord of Believers, we left Mahal in prison. The place was too dark, the transition too sudden, the motive too tragical, and the conduct of the armed men too harsh, not to have filled his heart with the most unpleasant sensations. The inhabitants of the vallies now appeared to him in a somewhat different light, and he felt a presentiment that God could not be quite mistaken with regard to them.

JUSTICE being very strictly, rigidly and speedily administered at Enoch, he was brought before his judges at day-break; a custom which the flood seems to have washed away with many others.

The Caliph. Such a custom certainly prepossesses one in favour of the sovereign of the country

country where it is eſtabliſhed; for where judges riſe thus early to do their duty, the monarch muſt be very vigilant.

Ben Haſi. Some men clad in ſcarlet entered Mahal's priſon, wrapped him up in a black garment, threw a black veil over his head, which hung down his ſhoulders in the form of a ſack, and then walked with him quite ſlowly, and howling in a deep tone, through the ſtreets. In a hall, the veil was taken from his face. Here he ſaw twelve black figures, wrapt up in the ſame manner as he had been a moment before, form a circle around him. Behind each of the muffled men, was one dreſſed in white, with a black ſtaff in his hand. One of the perſons clad in ſcarlet gave three loud beats upon a kettle-drum that ſtood in the middle of the circle. At the third beat, each of the whites touched with his ſtaff the man in black ſitting before him, and at that ſame moment the veils dropped down. The twelve unveiled men all ſtared at Mahal, without ſeeming to take any notice of each other; and from the ſize and carbuncles of their faces, it appeared that they did not fare meanly. A man in ſcarlet beat again the kettledrum, the whites touched

the judges with their flaffit, and the judges again veiled their countenances. Then one of the men in ſcarlet walked up to Mahal, and preſented to him the indictment or act of accuſation. Mahal held the act a long while in his hand, and looked at its ſingular ſigns and characters. The ſame man then preſented a pen to him, but Mahal refuſed taking it. The man in ſcarlet, impatient at this refuſal, threatened Mahal, who cried out at laſt:—"Men of Enoch! I come from the mountain, I know not what you want, nor do I underſtand the meaning of theſe ſigns."

WHILE Mahal's voice was reſounding, the men dreſſed in white gave nine very violent knocks upon the heads of the judges in black, who ran off in confuſion. The men in ſcarlet laid hold of Mahal very angrily, and dragged him along.

The Caliph. But why? What had the poor fool done?

Ben Hoſi. The forms had been violated, and this was a great offence to the court of judges. The latter having however collected in an adjoining room, were of opinion, that the accuſed ought to be inſtructed in the uſe of letters

letters and reading, and that his trial be put off till such time as he should be sufficiently proficient in his learning to make out the act of accusation, and deliver in his defence.

One of the schoolmasters of Enoch appeared therefore before Mahal, and told him the reason of his coming. Mahal, remembering the command of the Lord to set down in signs or letters all he should hear, see and think, carefully attended to the instructions he received of the man versed in letters. Mahal's childish ignorance giving on all occasions opportunity to his teacher to display his learning, there soon began to subsist between them the pleasant and peaceable relation which we so often witness between the learned and the ignorant. Mahal was never tired of asking questions, nor his teacher of answering him; and each answer was the subject of astonishment, of wonder, and new questions. Amongst other things, Mahal asked him what those muffled men in black were for; which question being answered and set down in too trivial a manner in the manuscript, so as to adapt it to the then unenlightened head of our traveller, I shall relate its substance in a manner more worthy of your Highness's bright understanding.

Among

AMONG all the corruptions, Lord of Believers, that undermine and sap the foundation of a state, there is none more dangerous or more ruinous, than the corruptibility of magistrates and judges. It immediately spreads around like the plague, and communicates itself to all that approach the infected. If, for instance, our Grand Vizier were infected with that horrid crime, you may safely infer, that it will extend to the Cadi of the smallest village in your empire. As soon as people see that law and justice are bought at market, every one will strive to devise plans to bring the corruptible magistrate over to his interest, to the detriment of his injured neighbours. Then vanishes all honour, all patriotism, all sentiment of right, and even all compassion. Avarice, covetousness, and vile interest then dissove all the bands of humanity, extinguish both in the injurer and the injured all confidence in the ruler: and universal degeneracy, and the miseries it produces, must finally shake and subvert the throne, were it even hewn out of rocks.

SUCH was the state of the empire of Enoch, continued Mahal's preceptor, under the ancestor of our sublime and most gracious sovereign. He saw the havoc, with pain and indignation,

dignation, and tried every means to ſtem its progreſs. He puniſhed; he rewarded: yet all was in vain; the fatal poiſon had penetrated too deep. He enacted the wiſeſt laws; they cut a ſplendid figure in the code of the empire; every body praiſed them; but they were only laws in the book. Alas! the monarch who wants to benefit a corrupted nation, impoſes a hard taſk upon himſelf. As quickly as one villain can corrupt a people, ſo ſlowly can many good men mend them again; and that many good men ſhould ſucceed one another on the throne, is a caſe on which hiſtory has hitherto been ſilent. The anceſtor of our ſublime monarch at laſt meditated a new plan; being reſolved, at once, and coſt what it would, to pull up the evil by the root. He ordered the moſt ingenious perſons in his dominions to be brought before him.

The Caliph. But who were thoſe that choſe and brought them?

Ben Hafi. The record does not tell. Probably they were the Viziers and the chief Cadis.

The Caliph. I have no objection to it; ſtill I ſhould have liked it better, had they

choſen common citizens, and not looked out for the moſt learned, but the moſt juſt.

Ben Haſi. The perſons ſelected were all learned young men, whom the Sultan ordered to be fully inſtructed in the laws; and after they had undergone the moſt minute examination, he gave orders to bore through in one day the drum of their ears, that they might be deaf, and to cut off as much of their tongue as ſhould make them completely dumb. He then gave orders to feed and keep them in the moſt ſumptuous manner, and the people were obliged to pay them the higheſt reſpect wherever they ſhowed themſelves. But when Enoch found that the deaf and dumb took the ſame courſe as thoſe who heard and ſpoke, he invented the uſages which I have juſt deſcribed.

They muſt try the offenders wrapt up in veils, they are only allowed to ſee their faces a ſingle moment, and the reſt of the proceedings between the accuſed party and his judges is tranſacted in writing. The accuſed, the witneſſes, the official defenders might then be conſidered as dumb as the judges were deaf; and being muffled up and veiled, their eyes, mien

mien and geſtures could not corrupt or preoccupy the judges. While the accuſed was writing his defence on large and ſoft leaves, all the judges ſat wrapt up; and when he had completed it, he was himſelf wrapt up again, and the verdict handed by each judge unveiled to the man dreſſed in white behind him, who delivered it to the preſident, who pronounced ſentence by a majority of ſuffrages, which was previouſly announced by the uſual written ſigns to the judges. The anceſtor of our great ruler, added the teacher of Mahal, truſted ſo very little to the judges thus maimed, that he thought it prudent and neceſſary to keep them ſecluded from all other men. Every one of them with his wife had a commodious and diſtinct dwelling aſſigned him, where he could gratify, without the ſmalleſt hindrance, the enjoyment of his remaining ſenſes. Government made it its buſineſs to ſupply him with every thing that a man of three ſenſes could poſſibly deſire. But in a ſhort time, all things went on in the old train; for as the wives of the judges could both hear and ſee, and ſpeak to their deaf huſbands by geſture, the accuſed ſoon found a more direct and a ſafer way to the hearts of the latter. To reform this abuſe

Sultan

Sultan Enoch made them undergo a certain operation, which he thought an infalliable remedy againſt all farther corruption.

The Caliph. What could that remedy be? If you will diſcover it to me, and it anſwers, I will make you the richeſt man in Bagdad.

Ben Hafi. He had them all caſtrated.

HERE the Grand Vizier, the Cadis, and the whole court cried, "What Caſtrated?" They looked at the old deaf eunuch, and the eunuch looked at them.

Ben Hafi. Yes, caſtrated! But thoſe who had the operation performed upon them, were rewarded by the appointment to the firſt offices of ſtate; and what your Highneſs ſcarcely will believe, though the record plainly expreſs it, is, that every family in Enoch made it their ambition moſt zealouſly to contend for that honour, and the ſucceſsful candidates ſtudied the law with unremitting diligence. The inſtructions of his teacher afforded Mahal ample ſcope for reflection. He owns himſelf, that without ſuch aſſiſtance he ſhould never have been able to comprehend the ceremony thro' which he went with the men in black, in white,

white, and in ſcarlet. He now fancied, that that court would ſoon put an end to his travels, but he was happily diſappointed. The man of letters had ſo often named the Sultan, as to excite Mahal's curioſity. He gave the moſt ſublime, brilliant, and pathetic deſcription to the latter of the perſon, qualities, and origin of his monarch. "The Sultans of Enoch," ſaid he, "are deſcended in a direct line from Naamah, the beauteous offspring of our grandſire Cain. The charms of this Naamah were ſo powerful, as to fill the hearts of the mighty ſpirits Aza and Azael with flames of terreſtrial love. Of them ſhe conceived the puiſſant Gedim. Aza endowed his ſon with terrible power, and Azael gifted him with a penetrating genius, an enterpriſing mind, and dangerous artifice. But Gedim's fathers being ſpirits, and not men, nor feeling by mens ſenſes, they forgot to give to their ſon, what is moſt neceſſary and valuable among men, ſympathy and compaſſion. But this very defect made Gedim a great monarch, as he would not ſuffer any private uſe of mean, ſecondary conſiderations to ſtop him in his plans enterpriſes, and exploits. Gedim diſplayed his wonderful gifts juſt at his heart's deſire,

became

become formidable to all, and delighted solely in his fame of terrific glory. He subdued his neighbours, and having conquered all he could by force and terror, kept his conquests together by his wisdom and his sword; instructed his subjects in the arts, and executed by them works which we still survey with amazement. So powerfully did he reign over the hearts of the men of his time, that the fear of him was propagated from generation to generation; and we still tremble at him before his descendant.

"FORTUNATELY, however, did the influence of the mighty spirits diminish a little in the sultans of each following generation: they are now much gentler; and all that they preserve of the gifts of Gedim, is the consciousness of their sublime origin, the contempt of those who spring from common or ignoble parents, and certain secrets, which the spirits taught Naamah, who communicated them to Gedim, from whom they were transmitted from father to son, in due hereditary succession.

"THIS," concluded the preceptor, "is a most fortunate circumstance for monarchs, since

ſince they can make uſe of ſecrets, where the light of plain truth might injure their intereſt. Such, Mahal, is the origin and pedigree of our exalted ſovereign; we wiſh that he may ſoon preſent us with an heir of his power, leſt his heaven-born race ſhould become extinct, and we poor Enochers be obliged to govern ourſelves by our fooliſh reaſon. We have long offered prayers and ſupplications to the formidable Gedim to grant us our wiſhes: at length he ſeems to have heard us, for the mighty ſpirits Aza and Azael have lately ſent down a virgin from the mountain. She is deſcended from the ſon of God Seth, and the Sultan has accepted her as his favourite Sultaneſs."

The Caliph. Is not this Sultaneſs the raviſhed daughter of your ſheepiſh Mahal?

Ben Haſi. Your Highneſs gueſſes right. Mahal himſelf, ſilly as he appears, ſuſpected that it muſt be his own daughter: and having convinced himſelf of the truth of his ſuppoſition, by ſeveral particulars which he aſked his tutor, he joyfully exclaimed: "Ah, Milka, my daughter!"—His preceptor deſired him to explain; and having heard what he had to relate

relate, he fell down in humble proſtration at his pupil's feet, ſaying: "Lord! remember me in thy greatneſs!" He then left Mahal abruptly, who, intoxicated with the thought of his daughter's being one of the mighty giants of the earth, whom he ſo much dreaded, almoſt forgot that this Sultan had forſaken the True God.

THE Caliph now beckoned Ben Haſi to retire for the night.

FOURTH

FOURTH EVENING.

Ben Hafi. MAHAL's teacher, great Caliph, went and blockaded the veſtibule of the chief of his tribe, till he obtained an audience. It was to him he related his adventure and all its particulars. The chief, anticipating the advantages that this accident would procure him in the favour of the Sultaneſs, to whom he had free acceſs at every hour of the day, being charged with curing her ignorance ſhe had brought with her from the old mountain, ran himſelf almoſt out of breath in bringing this gladſome news to the palace. The Sultaneſs, with due reverence, communicated the whole affair to her ſublime ſpouſe, who graciouſly condeſcended to order one of his meſſengers to fetch his father-in law with ſuitable reſpect.

MAHAL was now ſplendidly clothed, taken from the gaol, which had hitherto been his ſchool, and with every ſign of veneration, though againſt his will, and regardleſs of his

 prayers,

prayers, mounted on the back of a ſtately horſe richly capariſoned, and led, according to cuſtom, by ſeveral ſlaves or ſervants. Some of the criers and heralds of the court opened the proceſſion, exclaiming with an audible voice: "Hail Mahal! Hail deſcendant of Seth! The wiſe man of the mountain! The revered father of our fair Sultaneſs!" The people bent their bodies low to the ground on his approach; and Mahal himſelf confeſſes, that great as his fear was on the back of the prancing animal, he ſoon forgot it at the ſpectacle of ſo much ſubmiſſion.

The Caliph. I give him credit for that. Stupid as he was, he could not help becoming ſenſible of his having turned a quite different man, becauſe a ſultan honoured him.

Ben Haſi. We will now ſee how all this pomp agrees with him.—Miſka, the Sultaneſs, received him in the midſt of her court, dazzling in gold, ſilver, and diamonds Mahal either overpowered by her ſplendid appearance, or chilled by a haughty reſerve, durſt not accoſt her, preſs her to his palpitating heart, and ſhed tears of joy, as he could wiſh to have done. The Sultaneſs encircled

by

by her bright court, aſked him in a cold and formal manner how he did; and added with an air of indifference, that ſhe was glad to ſee him a viſitor at Enoch. He was now graciouſly diſmiſſed from her preſence, and his attendants amuſed him with their ſtiff and rampant homage till evening came, when a chamberlain introduced him to the Sultaneſs's inner room, where ſhe firſt embraced him, and aſked him reſpecting every thing that had happened. His heart now grew warm again; he gave her a circumſtantial account of all that had befallen him, not forgetting to touch upon his high miſſion, which, however, did not ſeem to attract the notice of the Sultaneſs. He finally entreated her with heartfelt concern to tell him the cauſe of the cold reception ſhe had given him in the morning. "Such," replied ſhe, "is the will of the mighty Sultan, my ſpouſe. He told me, that this conduct was one of the many ſecrets which Gedim had obtained by his mother from Azi and Aziel, to govern the human race." I found it a little hard at firſt; but the Sultan keeping me to it, and myſelf being more and more pleaſed with the awful and lowly homage of thoſe who ſurround me, I ſubmit to this conſtraint, and feel my compenſation in that of the people."

The Caliph. I like this Sultaneſs for her traſtability. Indeed, when I ſee my courtiers before me as humble as dancing dogs, and as pliable as the reed of the lake, I forget all the conſtraint which my high dignity makes me ſuffer. A ſmile, a frown, a wink, makes them do whatever I pleaſe. And this is a comfort that will make one bear ſomething too. How they can bear it, or comfort themſelves, I do not know.

Ben Haſi. The game which your Highneſs plays with them, they repeat again with their ſubordinate dependants.

The Caliph. And I ſuppoſe my dependants' dependants carry on the ſame with other dependants, and theſe with freſh dependants down to the loweſt dependant. This is certainly one of the ſecrets to keep mankind in order; and, thanks to the Prophet, I have diſcovered it.

Ben Haſi. Mahal was leſs fortunate; he long carped at the problem, and only found it more and more intricate.

The Caliph. His daughter, I dare ſay, will ſoon teach it him.

Ben

Ben Hafi. This we ſhall ſee. Before they parted that evening, Milka ſaid: "Father, the ſhort time I have ſojourned in this wonderful city, among theſe wonderful people, I have ſeen and experienced things which nobody ever dreams of on our dull mountain. The Enochers are not that bad race whom the auſtere Noah deſcribed to us. Only be traſtable, and do as I have done, and you will find every one ready to teach you.

THE next morning Mahal's attendants dreſſed him in a ſtill richer habit, girded a ſword about his loins, and introduced him to the golden hall of Sultan Pooh. Being informed that he would ſoon be bleſt by the preſence of this mighty ruler, Mahal's ſpirits were all alive, and his blood circulated quicker at the idea of beholding in a few moments the powerful monarch, the mighty man, the giant, the ſublime deſcendant of the ſons of God.

THIS Sultan Pooh, your Highneſs will obſerve, to whom by a long ſucceſſion very little had been left of the tranſcendant powers and endowments with which the ſpirits or angels had gifted his grandſire, endeavoured at leaſt to ſupply thoſe defects by the moſt

ſcrupulous obſervance of the ceremonies and formalities introduced by his predeceſſors.

The Caliph. Well, he did as much as he could, and he that does that does his duty. The ox draws the plow, the horſe carries the warrior, the camel bears the load.

Ben Haſi. And the monkey makes grimaces.

The Caliph. And makes even the angry laugh—

Ben Haſi. And the wiſe man think the more.

The Caliph. And he is a mirror to the fool.

Ben Haſi. In which he ſeldom ſees his own image. But let us turn to Sultan Pooh. He ſubjected himſelf and his courtiers to the moſt rigid forms of outward reſpect (becauſe that which is inward no Sultan on earth can command, unleſs he deſerve it) his houſhold was ſo regularly taught, that every thing moved as punctually as clock work; and as long as nothing obſtructed the motion of the wheels, he could very well diſpenſe with the ſpirit of

his

his anceſtors. I can aſſure you, Lord of Believers, that before the flood (ſince the flood the caſe is quite altered) many a ſilly fool thus maintained himſelf with honour on his throne, and it certainly would be the moſt commodious form of government, if the turbulent and ſeditious, unforeſeen circumſtances, little caſualties and accidents, did not at times deſtroy the ſmooth, eaſy and regular order of ſuch governments, and give birth to great and eventful revolutions. Nations would doubtleſs live happier under ſuch eaſy and quiet rulers, than under thoſe obſtinate, ambitious minds whom a thirſt for conqueſt conſumes, who fatten the earth with human gore, deſtroy cities without building new ones, waſte the reſources of the people in luxury, diſſipation and crime, bid defiance to the moſt ſalutary laws held ſacred by their anceſtors, and hover like a deſtructive comet, for a ſhort time, in the face of a ruined people, till death plunges them into that obſcurity from which it were better they never had riſen. Sultan Pooh, pleaſe your Highneſs, was none of thoſe warring rulers.

The Caliph. I ſhall not like him the worſe

for

for it. I thank God that I sit in peace on the throne of the Caliphate; but I do not forget that it first was gained by the sword. He who wants to feel the keen edge of mine, needs but attack my prerogative.

Ben Hasi. Sit always in peace on your throne; for, believe me, Lord of Believers, it is a much easier seat than that surrounded by the manes of the slain victims of war.—With this sincere wish, I follow the thread of my tale.

THE glittering brightness of the hall where Mahal now was; the magnificent throne, supported by lions, and ornamented at its top with a monstrous bird, wearing a human face, having long and wide spreading wings, the body of a goat, and the claws of a tiger; the rich dresses of the courtiers, the solemn stilness and the awfully respectful deportment of all present, served to impress him more and more with the conviction, that a being of a superior nature, of a particular and formidable kind would soon make his entry.

A LARGE gate flew open with a loud creak and at the same moment Mahal was violently thrown

thrown down, with his front on the marble pavement, and thoſe that kept him under, whiſpered into his ear: "For your life, ſtir if you dare!" Mahal remained in this poſture till the Sultan had given audience to his miniſters and courtiers, by ſurveying the whole circle with cold and earneſt looks. Then the maſter of the ceremonies preſented to the ſublime Pooh the proſtrate ſtranger. The Sultan with wonted majeſty, approached Mahal, and ſupported by the two firſt ſervants of the ſtate, put his foot on the back of his head, and ſtamped on it with ſuch might, that the raw and ignorant man of the mountain thought the foot of ſome huge giant was going to daſh out his brains. He ſhrieked, moaned, and ſtruggled with thoſe that held him, like a wild boar againſt the fangs of the hounds.

Sultan Pooh then ſeated himſelf on his throne, and ſoon after a piece of rich tapeſtry rolled down, and made him inviſible to the eyes of every beholder. Mahal was now raiſed from the floor; and his noſe and face being all over blood, the courtiers approached him with great reverence, to congratulate

him

him upon the happineſs he had experienced. Your penetrating genius, Succeſſor of the Prophet, will eaſily make you conceive, that the degrees of the Sultan's favour were meaſured by the effects of the force with which his Highneſs trod upon the head of the perſon preſented, and that a violent tread or kick of the Sultanic foot was as much deſired by the courtiers of Enoch, as the ſmiles of favour elſewhere.

The Caliph. A very ſingular ceremony! But there is a regular ſyſtematic order in the proceeding, which makes it reſpectable — Nevertheleſs, it was very wrong for the maſter of the ceremonies not to have inſtructed the raw mountaineer in the etiquette of the court. No officer of my houſhold durſt make ſuch a blunder, and hope for pardon.

Ben Haſi. But how could the courtiers of Enoch's Sultan ſuppoſe, that there was a man on earth ſo barbarouſly ignorant, as not to know the etiquette of the moſt antient court in the world?

The Caliph. Courtiers, to be ſure, are never at a loſs for apologies, which is a true mark of their high breeding. *Ben*

Ben Hafi. The courtiers of Enoch, conſtrained by Mahal's rude and ſavage deportment, then whiſpered into his ear the real meaning of what had been done, ſtopped the blood which guſhed out of his noſe with an aromatic water uſed for that purpoſe, and put him before the concealed throne. The curtain being quickly drawn up, Mahal ſaw on a ſudden the Majeſty of Enoch in all his luſtre before him, and was ſtill more ſurpriſed at this ſight than at the violent kicks he had received. Inſtead of a huge giant, a formidable ſon of God, and a mighty man, he ſaw a puny, peeviſh, pale form of a being, about five feet high, and loaded with jewels and other ornaments.—Thus your highneſs ſees thatthe influence of the powerful celeſtial ſpirits was not very perceptible, at leaſt in the body of this ſucceſſor of Gedim.

MAHAL's confuſion, his ſilly amazement, and his gaping look, were conſtrued very much in his favour. Sultan Pooh attributed the impreſſion he had made on his father-in law to his majeſtic appearance, to his elevated form, and to his large, glaſſy, and ſtaring eyes, the ſole hereditary traces left to him of

the

the grandeur of his anceſtor. Pooh, enraptured with the thought of his ſelf importance, even forgot the preſcribed rules, and ſmiled a little; but the Sultan ſoon recollecting his dignity, ſtared wildly before him. Thus ended an hour ſo great and momentous to Mahal. Amidſt an inceſſant buzzing of compliments and congratulations, the courtly ſwarm conducted him to his new apartments in the palace, where he immediately threw himſelf down in very bad humour upon a ſoft couch, he was more vexed at his diſappointment in not finding ſomething gigantic, grand, and celeſtial in the perſon of the monarch of Enoch, than at the rough thumps which his aquiline noſe and his forehead had received. "What!" ſaid he to himſelf, "that puny, ſullen bit of a man, that trampled upon the head of me, who am a deſcendant of Seth! that puppet of a creature, decked out with toys about whom every body ſtands ſtrembling! that dwarfiſh and emaciated wight rules over all the inhabitants of this mighty realm! What! the ſhivering Pooh operates all I ſee, hear, or perceive! and this ſo powerfully, that his name reſounds far and near like the dread thunder of the Almighty! How does he contrive all this?

this? What can be the magic by which he effects such wonders? Can it be because he is a descendant of the spirits? As far as I can see, there is nothing of the kind in him: compared with me, and most of those who stand trembling about him, he is but a shrivelled shadow. However, I cannot as yet discover why the Lord should be so embittered against the people of Enoch, for they all appear to be good natured; and though the sorry Sultan has trod me under foot, yet they assure me of his favour and benevolence.—How can such little weak creatures be so wicked as to provoke the wrath of the great God himself? How can they build these cities, these bridges, these towers? How can they tame the horse, and make the waters obey their strokes? How can that weak little man fetter the will of all the stronger?—How can they suffer him to dash their heads on the ground for the sake of a smile? He is no giant I see; and as he is no giant he surely is a sorcerer; his grandam Naamah had, no doubt, learned magic of the sons of God, taught it her son Gedim, and thus transmitted it as a patrimony to this little Pooh"

After this soliloquy Mahal remembered his tutor, and requested he might be sent for

with all possible expedition. When the man versed in letters entered the room, and saw the swelling of his pupil's nose, he complimented him on his good fortune, and commended himself to his favour. Having now given an account of the manner in which he caused the Sultaness to be informed of her father's arrival, he gave him a slight hint of the recompense he expected for his trouble. Mahal still absorbed in thought, paid no attention to his master's intimation, and contented himself with telling him of his disappointment in finding the Sultan a quite different being from what he expected.

His instructor now informed him, that he had really seen the greatest prodigy where he believed to have seen none at all. He then expatiated with energy on the secret virtues of the government, which concentred entirely in the Sultan's person. "It is my opinion," returned Mahal, "that if I had seen the greatest prodigy, as you suppose, I should have convinced myself, that Pooh is a descendant of the spirits or fea's of God. But forthwith I shall believe no such thing; and as to the secret virtues of your government, I shall take pains to trace them out."

THE teacher turned quite pale with affright at this bold aſſertion; and having looked around to ſee if any one had overheard their converſation, he was glad to find nobody preſent, broke off the diſcourſe with his diſciple, and actuated by the ſcruples of his tender conſcience, haſtened to impart to the chief of his tribe every word Mahal had ſpoken. The chief adviſed his informant to be ſilent on the ſubject, and recorded the denunciation in the book of memory.

MAHAL became afterwards as intimate with his ſon-in-law as his dignity of Sultan would admit; and this condeſcending intercourſe ſerved only to make him the more dubious about the ſublime magic endowments which he had been taught, were inherent in his ſacred perſon.

The Caliph. Very natural, your churl ſhould doubt ſuch things: had he been a ſenſible man, he would immediately have diſcovered, that it is not a maſs of fleſh and bones, but the ſpirit and the underſtanding that enable ſovereigns to govern men.

Ben Haſi. But ſuppoſe he could not diſcern that ſpirit and underſtanding in Pooh, what was the ſimple mountaineer to think?

The

The Caliph. Think!—What buſineſs has a ſimpleton to think?

Ben Hoſi. There is no other argument to be oppoſed to your Highneſs's deciſion, than that poor Mahal was obliged to think, and that his thoughts were out of the juriſdiction of the magician of Enoch. The manuſcript declares: "He ſtill could not conceive how the courtiers of Enoch could diſcover ſo much in their Sultan, in whom he diſcovered ſo little;" and he continued meditating upon the dark ſecrets which produced all the prodigies he ſaw. The Sultan bore with him, and outwardly eſteemed him as his wife's father; and the Sultaneſs was ſtill gracious to him on public occaſions, and ſhewed herſelf friendly in private.

MAHAL tired of the buſtle and pageantry of the court, now went forth into the populous city, accompanied by a few attendants. And if the Lord of Believers command it, I will interpret ſome of his obſervations to-morrow night.

The Caliph. So you may; but I ſuppoſe they will be very indifferent and dull.

FIFTH

FIFTH EVENING.

Ben Hafi. THUS ſpeaks Mahal in the record: Enoch is the city where men have fixed the ſcene of their turbulence. A river traverſes it which they call the Arrow, and over it they have raiſed an arch of ſtones, which is reported to be the work of Gedim; and to judge from its loftineſs, it is more the production of mighty ſpirits than of weak men. But weak as they are, they can nevertheleſs do great things, if they unite together in an undertaking. Their caves, which they denominate houſes, are very neatly furniſhed, decorated, and abounding in all that is convenient. Each cave has its door, that may be locked to prevent any body's ſeeing what goes forward in it. If one goes to another, he marks his coming by a loud knock at the door, for fear of ſurpriſing the maſter of the houſe in ſome bad deed.

I AM afraid to croſs the multitudes that throng the ſtreets; and think always they may begin ſome bad quarrel among themſelves

as I have remarked at my ſon-in-laws, that they cruelly hate one another, and that the Sultan himſelf durſt not ſhow his pale, ſullen, and peeviſh face every where.

THERE is a great number of perſons at Enoch, whoſe hands, with the aid of various tools, form all kinds of things for uſe and pleaſure, from wood, ſtone, metal, and threads. I ſaw myſelf, a young man that formed a figure from ſtone, and now I laugh at my fear of the ſtony image they call Love. I have certainly ſeen the ſame image at Enoch, but no ſuch interpretation has been given me of it as that I received from the inhabitants of the fields. Singular, yes very ſingular it appears that they who work moſt are the pooreſt, and inhabit the moſt miſerable and the dirtieſt holes. Thoſe in the fields, I hear, labour much harder, and are ſtill poorer; and thoſe who treated me ſo well on quitting the mountains, are not, I am told, country people, but citizens who only went out to amuſe themſelves and ſee the formal toil! On the other hand, there are many perſons in this city, and eſpecially at court, that are very rich, have plenty of every thing, do no work at all. They call theſe the better born; but how they live I can't conceive, particularly

as

as they want so many things; nor have I any idea how they manage it to be begotten and born better than the rest. Others go by the title of the Sultan's officer, of state, most of whom are of the better born class, and doubly well off. Others work with their wit and tongue for those who have no wit, nor know how to use their tongue; and they likewise stand very well. Others buy of the workmen and labourers in town and country all their produce at a very low price, and then sell it very high. He is the richest man who purchases cheapest and sells dearest. I wonder that they make the poor give a very high price for all they buy, and that the great and the chiefs get every thing much cheaper, and frequently don't even pay for what they have. This perhaps makes them sell every thing so very dear to the poor: and the poor are, in fact, too timid in presence of the rich; and if rich men wrong them, the poor hardly dare mention it.

Now I perceive why the better-born are so rich and do nothing: the poor work for them, and often one wealthy man keeps many hundreds, who work for him, and whom he does not call his supporters, but his inferiors. Things always go by a different name here from what they actually are.

THE

The Sultan and my daughter ſpend and waſte as much as muſt require ſome thouſands of hands to work for them. It is nothing to me; but what provokes me, is, that the rich and idle deſpiſe, and frequently even illtreat, thoſe who work for them. Thoſe labourers and workmen muſt be very good-natured indeed; elſe how could they put up with their miſerable pittance, and not wreſt from others that plenty which they firſt gave them? All thoſe to whom I have hitherto talked on this ſubject, tell me, that ſuch was the will of the mighty Gedim, and that Sultan Pooh enforces the hard mandate by his judges and the ſwords of his ſoldiers. It is very well that the multitude are afraid of thoſe maimed judges and thoſe armed ſoldiers; elſe I ſhould not like to be one of the better-born and rich.

The artiſts who create images from ſtones, and thoſe who imitate men, animals and trees with various colours, beſides the men verſed in letters, were quite ſatisfied with me. I loudly admired them, and ſeemed ſurpriſed at all they ſaid. My companions told the puny Sultan of it, who reprehended me bitterly; alleging, that my plainneſs diſgraces him, that no great man ought to admire any thing, and much leſs to manifeſt his ſentiments to his inferiors, ſhould even ſome object extort his inward-

inward admiration. He probably is affronted, becauſe I don't praiſe ſuch figures as reſemble him; and whenever he does not ſhow his peeviſh and effected face to the court, he ſhuts himſelf up, to form images much ſtiffer and punier than himſelf. I cannot praiſe theſe like his courtiers, nor can I praiſe any thing he ſays or performs. Yet after all he is not a bad man, and all the inhabitants of the city are good, amicable, and reſpectful to me. I am quite embarraſſed to gueſs what makes the Lord ſo irritated againſt them. Would it not be a pity to deſtroy people who execute ſuch great things, who animate dead ſtones, give different forms to metals, nay make them even a fluid fire, and paint their thoughts in ſuch a manner as to make two perſons converſe together, be they ever ſo diſtant from each other, nay even cauſe the dead to ſpeak to thoſe that ſtill are living? They live merry, even the workmen at certain times. They deny themſelves no kind of enjoyment, and go in purſuit of every pleaſure. Their favourite topics are feaſting, carouſing, dreſs and women. The noble-born like beſt to talk of the favour of my ſon-in law. All this does not ſurpriſe me, becauſe whatever they eat or drink is nice and palatable. Their women pleaſe by their affability

affability and beauty, and are very glad to see one take pains to please them; and in this case they do all they can to give one delight. That the great should be very solicitous of the Sultan's favour is very natural, because through it they get plenty of all they wish for from the rest of the people, and need not work for it. They do both good and bad with such an air of carelessness, as if they could not act otherwise. If I observe them closely, it seems to me as if they had no other rule of conduct, and as if the Lord was angry with them for things they cannot alter. Since he made them so, he surely must know best. My daughter, who walked the path of righteousness on the mountain, is become quite like them, and I hardly think her the same being. The conduct of the townspeople must indeed be very infectious; and their crimes, which have provoked God's displeasure, must be very natural to men. I am very sorry for it, especially since the source of their vices is attributed by the Lord and my brother-in law Noah to their own corrupted hearts. I hope I shall soon discover how it really is.

On the market place stands the great monument of Cain, the founder of Enoch. They call

call the spot holy, but I can't tell why.—They dare neither venture to touch the stone, nor approach it. In this place say the Enochers, Lamech shot Cain, who stood behind a bush, through the heart, with an arrow which he had let fly at a roe-buck. I thought in myself, much better had it been, if the Lord's arrow had struck Cain before he descended into the vallies to lay the foundation of this city. It would not then be full of horrors, as the Lord saith, and ripening unto destruction.

Here also stands in the same square the huge and frightful image of Gedim. His name is oftener used than the Lord's; whom these people seem to have quite forgotten for the sake of the former. I mentioned something about this to Sultan Pooh, who asked me, "if I was displeased at the people's honouring his great ancestor, and him in Gedim?"

About the image of the formidable Gedim there are many other images of the Sultans his successors, all very large, but still progressively smaller than Gedim. My puny son-in-law's figure is also among them, and is the largest statue after that of Gedim. The Sultans must be very fond indeed of being formed large in their images, and they cannot

not be great friends to truth. In these figures they look exactly such as I fancied them on the mountain. In fact, these men magnify all they do, form, or express; may be it happens, because they feel themselves so little, and wish to appear greater and better than they are! But nothing astonishes me more in those semblances of the Sultans, than that each of them should have some ferocious animal or bird of prey for his companion. My little son in-law has a huge lion at his feet, that furiously looks about, threatening to devour. The animal's fangs are very beautifully imitated. I will ask him about this matter; for as much as I know of him, I am sure he would almost die with fear at the very sight of a much smaller lion alive.

I HAVE dismissed my chattering teacher because I could not bear him on account of his constant talking about the sublime qualities of Sultan Pooh. For my part, I have not yet found any thing pleasant or great in him; and if he be not a magician, sure the fellows are all mad thus to quake and tremble at him.

I HAVE at last found a man, who promises to solve me the problem; his name is Ram. My son-in law cannot bear him I hear, and he dares not appear with the rest of the bet-

ter-

ter born to gape at him at court. He surely must think as I do, because he laughs at my anger. This Ram has taught me certain words, and shewn me how to apply them; so that I can now account for many things that happen among men, which I could not explain or conceive before. These words are, "Want, advantage, enjoyment, deception, hypocrisy, folly, pride, hope and fear."—The sense of these words, which he illustrates to me by different instances, makes me perceive the motives of many things that happen. In Ram's opinion, men are merely held together here by the virtue of those words, which are the source of good and evil, and of all that men do. I asked him, whence those words came, and who had invented them?—He answered: "Our instincts, our heart." I know in myself the instinct to hunger, to thirst, to woman, and for some time past, the instinct or wish to know every thing the inhabitants of the cities know. I can resist none of those instincts, nor could I give myself one of them. Suppose, now the inhabitants of the vallies could not master any of those instincts which Ram ascribes to them? Suppose they felt them so irresistible as not to be able to live in their cities together without gratifying them? Ram has likewise told me, that as long

as our forefathers lived in innocence upon the mountain, they knew nothing of all this, nor would they suffer any peevish ruler or sultan to ride on their backs. You speak the truth, replied I; and I, who am myself come quite lately from the mountain, can prove it. But how can the present race help it that their ancestors left the mountain, and settled in the vallies? Ram answered with a derisive grin: "Go on, Mahal, thou art in the right way." And as I mentioned something to him respecting the Lord's menaces, he replied with a horrid grimace: "The Lord might before now have put a stop to this farce: and if he took no delight in it, he would have done it long ago. But perhaps he does not mind it himself." I was shocked at these audacious words. Ram left me quite in a pet; and much in the wrong as he is, still his words press very heavy upon my mind.

The heart of my son-in-law must be as hard as the stone which forms his image. To day I went to the market place with those to whom he has given orders to attend me, and found a vast multitude assembled there; who no sooner perceived me, than they fled with awful respect. I now perceived Ram, my new instructor, who has taught me those sig-

nifi-cant

nificant words, ſtanding naked before Pooh's ſtatue, and a man ſcourging his trembling body with a large whip. I ſhuddered, and called to the tormentor to ceaſe cutting him: but he would not obey the order; and my guide very angrily ſaid to me: "Bid him double the ſtrokes, for the miſcreant has committed high treaſon." On aſking him what he meant by high treaſon, he informed me, that Ram had ſpoken ill of the Sultan, and openly declared, that he was not ſprung from the ſeed of the mighty of heaven, and was no more than any other man: further, that the ſtory of Aza or Azeal was a mere fable, invented to enſlave the people of Enoch. Had I not been in fear of the whip, and otherwiſe grieved at the hard treatment of Ram, I would certainly have cried: "Ram is in the right; and I am ſorry to ſay, Noah is in the right, and Sultan Pooh is a wicked fool. Were he of divine origin, he would not want to prove it by the whip." However I held my tongue, and went away in haſte, as I could be of no ſervice to my poor friend nor bear to hear his moans. I went to the Sultan, and informed him with indignation of what I had ſeen. He called me an ignorant madman, turned his back to me, and murmured, "If Milka were not my ſpouſe, I would ſerve thee in the ſame manner." I

muſt

must therefore be on my guard, leſt he ſhould be as good as his word.

The Caliph. I think your Mahal really wants a good flogging, to cure him of his whims. What thouſands believe, no individual ſhould doubt or queſtion, eſpecially if it be one of the ſecrets that ſupport the government.

Ben Higſi. You would entertain, Lord of Believers, a very wrong idea of the Sultan of Enoch's court, could you perſuade yourſelf, that a man who thinks and ſpeaks thus boldly would long be ſuffered, were he even the Sultaneſs's own father. The police of that city was too vigilant for the Sultan not to have gained intelligence of Mahal's connection with the ſcourged traitor, and of the other expreſſions he had at different times taken the liberty to utter. Fooh himſelf had overheard ſeveral of them; and the various queſtions with which he daily honoured him, were of too audacious a ſimplicity to recover to our mountaineer that favour which in fact had never been ſolidly granted. The chief of the men verſed in letters alſo thought it incumbent on himſelf, from a ſenſe of his duty as well as of his zeal for the Sultan's prerogatives, to inform him of every particular which

which Mahal's instructor had related to him. His tribe, like that of the better born, found their advantage and consequence inseparably connected with that of the Sultan; and on this account they exhausted all their wit and eloquence to persuade the people of his being of divine origin, and the second great source of all power. On this account the following different classes of men were invented at Enoch, viz. the priests of Gedim, the castrated and maimed judges, the great of the court with all the rest of the better-born, the Sultan's officers, and lastly the men versed in letters. All others were called the populace, and existed only, as Mahal says, to work for the privileged. Though those classes hated one another secretly, yet they always concurred in every thing concerning the praise or interest of the Sultan.

Poon began to look sour upon his father-in law, and his courtiers followed his example. Mahal, who stood bold even before the Lord, felt himself offended at the Sultan's displeasure. and freely gave vent in strong terms to his natural indignation. He also believed it was time now to prove his high mission, and to avenge God of the impostors.

One night Sultan Rooh treated him very contemptuously, and Milka, his own daughter, joined her husband in this ill usuage — The next morning, being the grand feast of Gedim, Mahal intended to upbraid her for her undutiful behaviour, and to reprehend her with her levity. Hitherto his well-meaning lectures had only rendered him disagreeable to the Sultaness, which she told him too without the least reserve. Regardless of the remonstrances of an old woman, who was charged with observing the conduct of the Sultaness, he penetrated into his daughter's bed-chamber, and found her with a young courtier in a situation in which he thought no other than his son-in-law had a right to be with her. The courtier fled through a secret door, and the indignant and ashamed father was just going to reproach his daughter with the criminality of her conduct, when the Sultaness with haughtiness and scorn exclaimed: "Do you think we are still upon the mountain among the flocks? Is my husband's court a den of beasts for every one to force his way into it without the least respect or caution?"

Mahal (enraged). Yes it is a den for the most execrable beasts, and thou art the impurest among them all.

The

The Sultaneſs (coolly). In what reſpect? Wherefore?

Mahal. Can my daughter, the offspring of Seth, aſk ſuch a queſtion? ſhe, who but lately inhabited the mountain where God dwelleth!

The Sultaneſs. When I lived on the mountain, I lived as a mountaineer; but now that I live at court, and am a ſultaneſs, I live as they do at court, and as a ſultaneſs ought. Thus I am taught by every body. I follow the leſſons of my teachers, and I adviſe you to the ſame: elſe it were better for me and you, that you return to your auſtere brother Noah and his flocks.

Mahal. Ought a ſultaneſs to live in the ſtate in which I found thee?

The Sultaneſs. Why not, if ſhe has ſuch a ſpouſe as I have? If I wiſh to remain a ſultaneſs, and not to be repudiated like my predeceſſors, I muſt take care, they ſay, to bring forth heirs to this throne. I will not bear the diſgrace of the Sultan's former wives, whom he accuſed of ſterility, and arraigned as criminals. I know now, that among the great qualifications which the ſons of God be-

queathed

queathed to his anceſtor, and all of which he is ſaid to poſſeſs, that alone is wanting which can make me a mother.

MAHAL attempted to ſpeak, but the Sultaneſs interrupted him, ſaying: "Be not angry with me! Is it my fault that I am Sultaneſs of Enoch? Why have you left the mountain, where, you ſay, the Lord dwelleth? While you was there, you quarrelled with every one, found fault with and loathed every thing. Did not you call your own brother a dull fool? Did not you tell me a thouſand times, you was tired of living there, and wanted to deſcend into the vallies, to ſee the men in the cities and their mighty rulers, and to diſcover all their knowledge and actions? I anſwered nothing; but my heart leaped for joy, as you had kindled the deſire of novelty in my boſom. You ſlept near me in the cavern, at the foot of the mountain; the mighty men carried me off; you never followed me, and they brought me hither. They gave me rich garments, and the high prieſts preſented me to the Sultan, ſaying: "Wiſe ſon of the moſt puiſſant Gedim the ſon of Aza and Azael! behold a pure daughter of the old God, fair as thy grandam Naamah, who inflamed the mighty of heaven with

with terreſtrial fire. Gedim ſends her by us to be your ſpouſe. Receive her from us, that you may beget a blooming progeny of ſons and daughters, and that the people of Enoch may live for ever happy under the deſcendants of Aza and Azael!" The Sultan has made me his ſpouſe, and great were the rejoicings throughout the empire. Pooh, and all his court, flatter and adore me, and I am delighted with their homage. Tell them now what you have ſeen, none will believe you, and the miſchief will retort upon yourſelf.".

THIS ſaid, the Sultaneſs withdrew to an adjoining apartment, and left Malul by himſelf, much grieved at her ſpeech. His own conſcience was going loudly to accuſe him, when he ſuddenly felt the influence of the new ſocial refinement he had acquired. He excuſed his deſcending from the mountain, with his thirſt for knowledge and ſcience, with the expreſs command of the Lord; and loading with curſes the ſeducers of Milka, found freſh motives for hating the Sultan, in the unfavourable deſcription which his daughter had given him of his character. He began even not to palliate her precaution, her fear of being rejected was ſo very well founded.

THE

The ſound of trumpets and kettle drums, and the ſhouts of the people, rouſed Mahal from his meditations. He repaired to the Sultan who ſoon after went in ſtate with his whole court to the market place, to offer ſacrifices before the monuments of Cain, Gedim, and the reſt of the Sultans. Lambkins and ſteers, ornamented with ribbons of various colours, ſtood before the altar, and Pooh took his place facing the image of Cain, where the ſacrifices were to begin. The prieſts drew their knives, and each of them ſized an animal. Previous to the high prieſt's giving the ſignal of ſlaughter, he proſtrated himſelf with all the people before the Sultan, to whom he addreſſed a long ſpeech, attempting to prove that Pooh united all the great qualities and ſublime powers of his anceſtors. The monarch liſtened to the orator with wonted gravity, while Mahal almoſt burſt with indignation. The high prieſt compared the prince ſeveral times with Gedim, his grandſire, and called him the divine ſprig of the ſons of the heavenly ſpirits; and the people exclaimed: "So he is! So he is! The ſon of Gedim! The deſcendant of Aza and Azael!" Mahal would perhaps have borne this revolting ſcene, had not the Sultan himſelf provoked him to give way

way to his inward fury. Pooh, perceiving that his father had not fallen down with the reſt of the people, but remained ſtanding like himſelf, his gravity changed into viſible rage, and his eyes fulminated threats upon the profane. Mahal now roared out with terrible impetuoſity: "Lord, why did not thy arrow kill the murderous Cain, before he could lay the foundation of this deteſtable idolatrous city? Thy wrath is juſt; extirpate them all. They worſhip this peeviſh wight here, and forget thee for the moſt wretched and miſerable of thy creatures!"

MAHAL'S enthuſiaſm now prompted him to tell the people of Enoch of his miſſion, and to thunder the dread vengeance of God into their ears; when a hoſt of armed men ſurrounded, ſeized, and carried him off.

THE Sultan, enraged as he was, remembered his high dignity, and reſumed his former majeſtic compoſure. The victims were then ſlaughtered with the uſual ceremony; a ſpeech concluded the ſolemnity, and the prince with his courtly train returned with pomp to the palace.

THE Sultaneſs, appriſed of her father's madness long before the monarch's return, was convinced

convinced that Mahal would never thrive at court, and dreaded even leſt his natural impetuoſity ſhould make him expoſe her adulterous connection. She therefore ſent word to the chief of the learned tribe to wait on her, and imparted to him the anxiety ſhe felt at the danger in which her father had involved himſelf, and which might probably ſubject her to the ſame predicament. The chief anſwered: "That ſhe certainly would be in the moſt imminent danger, if ſhe attempted to excuſe or palliate the crime of her father, of whoſe heinouſneſs there was no precedent in the annals of Enoch. Her father's puniſhment was abſolute death, but the Sultan might perhaps pardon him as one of his family; on which account he would adviſe her to meet Pooh at his return, to complain heavily of her father's conduct, and to propoſe to have him maimed and caſtrated as a judge. He added, that by ſo doing ſhe would appeaſe the Sultan's wrath, incapacitate her father from all future mad tricks, and raiſe him to one of the firſt and moſt honourable charges in the ſtate."

The Sultaneſs followed this advice, met her ſpouſe, uttered a thouſand reproaches and complaints againſt her foolish father, ſhed

tears,

tears, and, by dint of sighs and caresses, prevailed upon the Sultan to adopt the proposed mode of cure, and to give orders to put it in execution. It was farther resolved by the ministers, to prevent Mahal's committing other offences of that kind, to exempt him from the usual study of the law, and to install him in his judicial office the very next day.

Milka now caused her father to be brought before her, reproached him with his frantic behaviour, informed him how she had saved him from inevitable destruction, and confidentially acquainted him with the honourable medium that had been adopted to save him. Mahal became so furious, that he was going to seize his daughter by the hair, and to chastise her with all the severity of paternal power; when her women and her instructor suddenly broke in upon him, upbraided him with his black ingratitude, and felicitated him upon the unmerited honour which awaited him. He now recollected the words which, in the opinion of his whipped friend Ram kept society together, and were the source of all the good or evil men do, and prudently was silent.

The attendants of the Sultaness, finding

 him

him thus quiet, diſmiſſed him. But Mahal, unwilling to wait his inſtallation, ſtole ſecretly out of the palace at the approach of night, threw himſelf into a boat on the river, and, committing himſelf to the mercy of its ſtream, left Enoch, exclaiming: "Lord, deſtroy them all!"

Ben Hafi now put up the record, and took his leave of the Caliph till next evening.

SIXTH

SIXTH EVENING.

Ben Hafi. YOU will remember, Lord of Believers, that we left Mahal in the boat, deſcending with the current of the river.—— Much as he had experienced ſince he left the mountain, he was not yet ſufficiently ſkilful to digeſt it properly. The taliſman of the words which Ram had taught him, enabled him to unveil many a puzzling ſecret, and thoſe words were conſtantly in his mind, or on his lips, while he was meditating in his boat on all he had heard and ſeen.

HE was ſo enraged againſt his daughter, and ſo occupied with thoſe that had offended him, that he could not ſpare a minute to liſten to what his heart was ſaying reſpecting himſelf. At laſt the moment came, when his conſcience would remind him without flattery, as without reſerve, of certain particulars of his paſt conduct; ſuch, for inſtance, as the delight he took in the amuſements of the idolatrous Enochers, his ſilence at the criminal intercourſe between his daughter

ter and the courtier, the reproaches she made him, &c. His mind, however, which had got somewhat enlightened, soon appeased the troublesome and severe judge. He secretly whispered to himself: "I have avenged the Lord of that miserable wight of a Sultan, and only put myself in danger, pursuant to his almighty will." He even went so far in his illusion as to dare imagine that the Enochers would be the best people in the world, if Pooh did not reign over them; and that God would soon be reconciled, if some sage would take upon himself to instruct them. Thus he soon absolved them from the curses which he had loaded them with on leaving Enoch, and poured them entirely upon the Sultan and his court, not excepting his own daughter.—— Hunger finally drew him from the depth of his reflections. He had been gliding down the stream for near fourteen hours, beheld its flowery banks planted with trees whose branches bent under the load of the finest and most savoury fruits, discovered a great number of dwellings both near and far, but saw no possibility of reaching them. Utterly ignorant of navigation, he began to fear lest the river should carry him to the extremity of the world. This fear rendered his situation very unpleasant: he now sighed with a secret longing

ing for his mountain, which began to loſe itſelf in the blue ſky, and repented of having ſo fooliſhly left it to go in queſt of mighty giants, in whoſe ſtead he had only found a dwarfiſh prince, who had attempted to cripple and caſtrate him for a judge.

DOWNCAST and half ſtarved, he deſcried at a great diſtance ſome rocks in the river, which had drawbridges to paſs to a town ſituate on an eminence on the banks of the river. This view quite enlivened his ſpirits; but the boat ſtriking on a rock, was violently daſhed to pieces; and Mahal, up to his ears in the water, fortunately laid hold of one part of the rock, trembling with agony, and woefully crying for help. On the oppoſite bank of the river was a man looking at him with cold indifference, and exclaiming:—— "Yes, thou wilt be drowned, as ſure as thou art born." On a little iſlet not far from the poor ſufferer was a fiſherman mending his torn nets; who no ſooner ſaw the danger Mahal was in, than he flung himſelf into the waves, and with great difficulty, braving the impetuoſity of the ſtream, ſaved his life by dragging him on ſhore, where he immediately fainted. When he recovered, he found that the perſon who had ſo exultingly called out

to him that he would be drowned, was his teacher Ram, who ſtood before him, ſeemingly pleaſed with the diſtreſs he was in. He aſked Mahal the motive of ſo unexpected a voyage; who anſwered, quite faint and exhauſted: "I periſh for hunger, and have no ſtrength to ſpeak."

The fiſherman had no ſooner heard Mahal utter theſe words, than he ran to fetch him his own meal and ſome milk. The man of the mountain having thus recruited ſome of his loſt ſtrength and ſpirits, told Ram his woeful ſtory; but the latter ſoon began to laugh, and to tell him: "Had you better underſtood the ſenſe of the words I taught you, you might have lived in clover at Poob's court, and never riſked the danger of being drowned here. But, deſperate as your caſe was at Enoch, you acted prudently in doing as you have done. Be more cautious in future, as you will not always find ſo good-natured a fool as this fiſherman to take you out of the water at the hazard of his own life." Mahal anſwered him quite in a paſſion: "Pray tell me, Ram, why was you, who boaſt of wiſdom, ſo fooliſh as to provoke the Sultan to ſuch a pitch as made him ſentence you to the whip and baniſhment?"

Ram.

Ram. What I did from an exceſs of underſtanding you did from ſtupidity. I had deſigns of a very different nature; and had it not been for the falſehood of my confidents (for friends there are none,) I ſhould ſoon have diveſted your peeviſh Pooh of his divinity. And if I have been worſe treated than you, it is to be recollected, that I was not his father-in law.

Mahal. But why was you ſo unfeeling at my danger in the water? and what makes you call this good man here who ſaved me, a fool?

Ram. Self-preſervation bids me act thus. This ſelf preſervation is a thing very well known upon your mountain, though it may go by a different name. I beg you will mark the word and its ſenſe, as through it you will reſolve many things that happen in you or in others. As for the fiſherman, he certainly is a fool for putting his life in danger for your ſake; and thoſe who want his ſupport would have been but very little obliged to him had he been drowned on your account.

MAHAL ſighed, and ſaid: "I have again learned a new word!"

THE

The ſun had now gained the meridian; and his beams darting fire, the whole group retired to a ſmall wood, where the fiſherman made Mahal a bed of moſs, and hung his wet clothes upon the trees to dry. Mahal, tired as he was, ſoon fell into a ſound ſleep. Ram followed his example; while the honeſt fiſherman buſied himſelf with mending his net, and turning Mahal's clothes to dry. While they were faſt aſleep, a heavy tempeſt began to gather over their heads. Suddenly, tremendous peals of thunder awoke them, and the fiſherman adviſed them to quit the wood as expeditiouſly as poſſible, as the lightning uſed frequently to fall into it. But he had not quite uttered theſe words, before a vivid flaſh of the angry element ſtruck him dead at their feet. Mahal and Ram were likewiſe ſo much hurt by the ſhock, that they remained ſenſeleſs for ſeveral minutes. Having recovered a little, Ram immediately perceived the body of the fiſherman, and ſarcaſtically exclaimed: "*Now thou haſt got thy reward!*" Mahal, on the contrary, overwhelmed with grief at the fatal death of his bounteous friend and deliverer, cried: "Lord, whoſe hand throws down the lightning, why haſt thou done this? Why haſt thou ſlain the ſaviour of my life? Why haſt thou ſpared him that laughed at my peril?"

RAM, offended at Mahal's ejaculation, anſwered with contempt: "He who you ſay throws down the lightning, probably killed this fool for having ſaved the life of thee who art a ſtill greater fool!"

MAHAL trembled, and ſaid: "Thou blaſphemeſt the Lord, whoſe thunder is ſtill roaring in the diſtant ſky!"

Ram. What are you chattering now?—Had you not acted like a fool at Pooh's court, you would not have been obliged to fly; had you not been obliged to fly, you would not have gone into the boat; had you not gone into the boat, it would not have been daſhed to pieces againſt the rock; had not the boat gone to pieces againſt the rock, you would not have been in danger of being drowned; had you not been in danger of being drowned, you would not have cried and moaned like a daſtard; had you not cried and moaned like a daſtard, you would not have induced this fool to ſave you; had he not ſaved you, he would have quietly remained in the iſlet to mend his net; had he quietly remained in the iſlet to mend his net, he would not have come into this wood, which he ſaid is often ſtruck with lightening; had he not come into this wood, the lightning, which was to fall

upon

upon this ſpot, and not upon any other, would not have killed him; conſequently you or the benefit conferred upon you has killed the fool.

The Caliph. Oh, the audacious wretch!

Ben Hafi. Ram now ſaid: "Be at leaſt grateful enough to bury your deliverer. I do not think he was an inhabitant of the wiſe city of Irad, which lies on thoſe hills. I would have you go thither, and you ſhall learn many new things. I am now haſtening to a land which is governed, they ſay, by a ſultan philoſopher."

MAHAL begged Ram to ſtay with him a little longer to explain himſelf; but the latter anſwered: "I ſhun thee, and do not chooſe to ſee thee again. Thy company begets danger and deſtruction, as the boat and this corpſe plainly atteſt."

AT theſe words Ram fled, and diſappeared in the wood, while Mahal ſtood quite bewildered, and cried with a ſigh: "Can God have killed this good man becauſe he ſaved me? Would he then be juſt? For doing a good and generous action has the fiſherman periſhed? and ſhall Sultan Pooh, who with his

his whole court riots in luxury and diſſipation, be allowed to live at Enoch? Alas! the Lord would not take my part when they wanted to mutilate me; yet, to defend him, I provoked the reſentment of the idolaters upon my head!"

With heartfelt ſorrow he long ſurveyed the remains of the poor fiſherman; wept, dug a hole in the earth, and committed them to its boſom. Then croſſing the bridge, he advanced to the city of Irâd. The ſultan of this place—

The Grand Vizier. What, another ſultan? Muſt their ſacred character always be the ſubject of your dull tales; Why do not you entertain his Highneſs with magicians, fairies, genii, and other ſpirits?

The Caliph. Ben Hafi's tales may be dull; but ſurely they are not ſo becauſe ſultans are the principal ſubject of them. Indeed, what can intereſt one more than the rulers of the world? I like to be in company with my equals: and a tale without a ſultan acting the firſt part in it is not worth hearing. Yet I muſt confeſs, that I like the tales of ſultans mixed with the wonders of the world, of fairies and ſpirits; and if Ben Hafi will blend his tales with them, I ſhall be glad to hear him.

Ben

Ben Haſi. I will follow my manuſcript, and tell no falſehood for any one.

'THE Sultan of Irad was aſſembled with his counſellors in the divan, to deliberate upon the moſt important, neweſt, moſt ſingular and unheard of thing on which a ſultan has ever deliberated in his divan. Your Highneſs will perhaps believe, that the wiſe men of Irad enquired, "Whether it would be better to wear a long or a ſhort beard? What was virtue, and whether it was wanted in a ſtate? Whether it was innate or taught? Whether the ſultan was on the throne for the ſake of his ſubjects, or whether his ſubjects exiſted for the ſake of him? Whether it would be beſt for men to be free or to be ſlaves, as in the latter caſe they muſt ſtill earn their bread? Whether the dignity of Sultan was an office like every other office, or only a bright ſinecure? If man belonged to the beaſts of burden, how large a load he would in ſuch caſe be able to carry?" But none of theſe queſtions, Lord of Believers, made the ſubject of the Sultan's deliberations.

The Caliph. I am not much diſpoſed now to gueſs, though I ſuppoſe the Sultan conſulted how to render his people very happy and contented.

contented. If I have not gueſſed right, I command you to tell me immediately what it was.

Ben Haſi. I obey your Highneſs. Sultan Zobar of Irad deliberated with his counſellors, how to contrive to get into his hands all the gold of his ſubjects; that is to ſay, how to make himſelf chief treaſurer, caſhier, and keeper of all their gain and revenues, and only to leave them as much at their diſpoſal as might enable them to work on in his ſervice, and get more.

The Caliph. Thou raileſt, Ben Haſi! Can you call a thing that happens every day a novelty unheard of?

Ben Haſi. I meant, that before the flood it was unheard of. I know very well that ſultans manage it quite differently ſince.

The Caliph. What occaſion was there for the Sultan of Irad to conſult his divan about ſeizing all the gold of his ſubjects? He only needed to take, as they were obliged to give; and my viziers can prove, that all they poſſeſſed belonged to the Sultan, though I am rather doubtful of the truth of their aſſertion.

Ben Haſi. Doubts are certainly juſtifiable

on ſuch a ſubject. In other reſpects, the Sultan of Irad might ſafely have acted as you ſay, after the flood. But before it, there would have been ſome danger in adopting ſuch a conduct at Irad, ſince the Iradians claimed certain rights of their own.

The Caliph. Rights! Rights! What do you mean by rights? I never heard ſuch a thing mentioned in my divan.

Bendlaſs. For inſtance: to call a thing by its right name, provided it was the right name, and could not be conſtrued a different way. But as the viziers of Irad had reſerved to themſelves the privilege of conſtruing words, the ſpeaker was obliged to be very cautious how he made uſe of this right. Farther, to laugh if ſomebody tickled them, and to cry if they were beat or otherwiſe hurt. To murmur, if they did reluctantly what they were bid provided the Sultan's officers did not overhear them. To eat and drink what they could pay for. To play the fool publicly whenever they liked, and even to make their own children, if they would take the trouble, or their wives pleaſed. All theſe rights, ſo hateful to the Sultan of Irad, might have been conquered by his Highneſs in the long run; but

But the Iradians worſhipped gold as their god, and this was the great difficulty. Men, you know, don't like to be deprived of their god, eſpecially if it is not the true God, but an idol. For this they would riſk their lives and even the obedience they owe to the Sultan.

The Caliph. Horrid idolatry!

Ben Haſi. And one of the ills, they ſay, which have not been quite waſhed away by the flood. So for the above ſtated reaſon the Sultan of Irad was obliged to be very cautious how he conducted himſelf in ſuch a delicate buſineſs.

The Caliph. I truſt to his Divan for ſettling it.

Ben Haſi. Your Highneſs's truſt reflects honour on your experience, and the counſellors of Irad's Divan knew very well that their god was not in danger, and could only gain as much more value and weight, as the god of thoſe who were not viziers and ſtateſmen would loſe. While Zobar ſat thus deliberating in his Divan at Irad, Mahal entered the gates of the city. An armed man pointed a lance at him, aſking our traveller theſe queſtions: Whither? Whence? Wherefore?" Mahal

Mahal anſwering him very civilly, that he was one of the ſons of Seth, who came from the mountain, and travelled to learn the wiſdom and knowledge of men, the armed man, according to cuſtom, ordered one of his comrades to conduct him to the Sultan. The Sultan permitted him to enter; and being ſtill occupied with the momentous buſineſs I told you before, he aſked him very eagerly, "What bringeſt thou, ſtranger?"

Mahal (very ſolemnly). Sultan of Irad, I bring thee the fear of God.

Sultan Zebar. None of that, ſtranger! We only dread poverty here. Haſt got gold?

As Mahal anſwered this important queſtion with a phlegmatic *no*, the counſellors one after the other diſdainfully exclaimed: "He is a worthleſs fellow! He is no man! He has no gold!"

He was then rudely turned out of doors, and the Divan reſumed their deliberations.

Mahal was quite at a loſs to divine the real ſenſe of the queſtion, and the cauſe of this ſingular reception. At Pooh's court he wanted no gold, as his attendants were his purſebearers; and at his flight he had not thought

thought of ſupplying himſelf with that neceſſary article. "No gold!" exclaimed he, left alone in the middle of the ſtreet. "No gold! And is it for this they turned me out, and muſt I remain in the ſtreets becauſe I have no gold? This is, I dare ſay, the news which Ram told me I ſhould learn here.—This Sultan of Irad is certainly no giant, but much taller and ſtronger than my puny ſon-in-law: but the queſtion is, if he be better and more reaſonable for that."

MAHAL looked about himſelf a great while, to ſee if nobody would ſpeak to him: his eyes followed every one, but every one paſſed by without taking the leaſt notice of him. He thought now, that the inhabitants of Irad were not ſo friendly and affable as thoſe of Enoch, and imagined it proceeded from his being a ſtranger whom they did not know. Night coming on, and his appetite beginning to grow very keen, he ventured at laſt to enter a large houſe. The maſter immediately met and aſked him on the threſhold, who he was and what he wanted. Mahal modeſtly replied, "I am one of the ſons of Seth, who am hungry, and want ſhelter under your roof!" "Haſt got gold?" returned the Iradian. As he uttered his melancholy *no*,

the Iradian puſhed him down the ſteps, and called out after him, in the hearing of all thoſe that paſſed that way, "A worthleſs thing! He has no gold!" Theſe words refounded like the echo through every ſtreet: Mahal ran from houſe to houſe, but all doors were ſhut againſt him.

The Caliph. What a deteſtable people! They know nothing of hoſpitality; and their crime, which is the greateſt on earth, God will not leave unpuniſhed, ſays the Prophet.

Ben Haſi. The Iradians, Lord of Believers, will ſtill more ſhock your good heart. The contempt with which theſe works were repeated by the inhabitants, their ſcornful looks, and inſulting ſneers, almoſt wore out Mahal's patience. Hunger made him rage, the coldneſs of a wet and ſtormy night ſhook his frame, and he exclaimed in his deſpair: "Lord, deſtroy thoſe cruel men, they deſerve thine anger! They refuſe ſhelter and a morſel of bread to the deſcendant of thy ſervant Seth, whom thou calledſt thy ſon! They deny the name of man to him with whom thou haſt deigned to ſpeak! Lord, thy wrath is juſt; hard and barbarous are the inhabitants of the cities!"

The Caliph. It muſt be ſhocking to ſuffer hunger and cold, where bread and warmth are ſo near!

Ben Hafi. Yet there were men on earth, both before and after the Flood, who periſhed by thoſe horrid wants. In my wanderings I have heard and ſeen ſeveral individuals thus oppreſſed; but I will not ſhock farther your Highneſs's generous feelings, and have ſaid enough for this night.

The Grand Vizier. Nobody, Lord of Believers, ſuffers hunger or oppreſſion in your empire.

The Caliph. I ſhould hope ſo for thy own ſake.

Ben Hafi was now permitted to quit the preſence of the Caliph and his court, and went away much pleaſed with the impreſſion which his laſt words ſeemed to have made on the mind of the Grand Vizier.

SEVENTH

SEVENTH EVENING.

Ben Hafi. MAHAL, who ſtill continued ſhivering and hungry on the pavement of the ſtreets, now began, for the firſt time, to reproach himſelf with folly for having left the mountain, where his flocks ſupported him. But ſince fretting would not ſatisfy the cravings of an empty ſtomach, nor the Lord haſten to puniſh the Iradians as he had wiſhed, hunger and piercing cold made him attempt at laſt to knock at a ſmall hut at the farther end of the city. An old man came out, and aſked him who he was and what he wanted, Mahal told him his ſtory in a few words, and repeated his old requeſt; to which the old man returned the ſame anſwer he had received before.

Mahal. A worthleſs thing! Why, am I not a man? Am I not formed like thee? Are not my ſoul and wants like thine? And art thou not as apt to feel cold and ſuffer hunger as I am?

The

The Old Man. Fool, for ſuch thou art, it is thy very misfortune to feel thoſe wants, without having gold to relieve them. The beaſts feel them too; which makes us at Irad call a beaſt every one that has no gold, becauſe he muſt live on prey like the beaſt of the field. But the beaſt is ſtill better off, as the law does not doom it to die for its depredations, but it pronounces death upon the far more dangerous and worthleſs thing which is formed like thee and lives on prey.

MAHAL fetched a deep groan, and remembered with tears in his eyes, his mountain, the ſeat of peace and innocence. "Oh!" ſaid he to the old man, "if you will not have me ſubſiſt on prey, give me bread and ſhelter. To-morrow I will go farther, and quit this land of barbarity. Even ſhould hunger make me periſh, my bones ſhall not repoſe in this hard ſoil."

The Old Man. Fool! does this ſoil want your carcaſe? Who would pay us for burying it? But tell me, what ſhould I give thee bread and ſhelter for?

Mahal. For the ſake of humanity.

The Old Man. Have I not told thee, that we

we Iradians don't reckon as men, the things that have no gold?

Mahal. Then give it me for the ſake of the Lord, who feeds and ſupports us all.

The Old Man. Fool, behold the ſkin of my hands hardened with labour, behold my ſunburnt face! Work ſupports us, and nothing elſe. Gold is the god of Irad, we know no other, and he alone makes us what we are.

MAHAL, turning pale at this blaſphemy, began again to damn all mankind. The old man ſeemed all the while to be pauſing at ſomething; and ſoon after he brought our traveller to the light, looked at and examined his body, felt his hands and neck, and meaſured the breadth and length of his back, ſaying: "For a beaſt of burden thou mayeſt do well enough. I loſt one lately, and if thou wanteſt me to give thee bread and ſhelter, take this ſpade: my nephew ſhall lead thee to an adjacent field, the moon ſhines beautifully clear, turn up the earth that I may ſow to-morrow, and return hither when I whiſtle and thou ſhalt have meat and drink, and a place to reſt upon. At day-break I ſhall load and drive thee to market.

MAHAL

MAHAL took the ſpade, conſidered his treatment as a deſerved puniſhment, went with the boy to the field, and laboured till midnight, when he returned at the ſound of the whiſtle to the old man's, who gave him ſome bread, and, puſhing him afterwards into a dark place where he kept his beaſts of burden, immediately ſhut and bolted the door upon him, muttering, "Things that have no gold are dangerous."

WHEN the old man was loading Mahal in the morning with a number of heavy baſkets, he ſaid to him: Look, ſtranger; thoſe who are without gold muſt lend their hands and back, that thoſe who want them may get gold by them. Though thou haſt no gold, yet thou art worth it like any other uſeful domeſtic animal. And if thou doeſt as much as thy ſtrength will allow, thou never ſhalt want for bread and ſhelter; for we even ſpare the beaſt for the ſake of our intereſt."

MAHAL bent his broad back, heard patiently what the old man told him, and ruminating on his way and beneath his burden upon the ſenſe of his words, he ſoon found his new maſter, who was walking behind him, give energy and force with his cudgel to what he

he had learned of Ram. The populace in the ſtreets cried out: "A good ſtrong beaſt you have got, old man; it has a nice neck and back; if it plays no bad pranks, it will be worth its food."

In this manner was Mahal obliged to carry every morning large loads to market, and paſſed afternoons, evenings, and the beſt of moonlight nights, labouring in the field.—Each day he cleared up ſome new point of human life, which grew hourly more inſupportable to him. Often would he thus lament his fate in the ſtable: "How bright and cheerfully did the ſun riſe on the mountain, and how dull and hateful does it appear to me in this humid dirty hole! There the ſongs of the birds, and the ruſhing of the waters from the rocks, would ſecond my morning ſong. Gentle breezes fanned my ſocks during my ſoft repoſe; the rich milk of my flocks fed me, and my wife and daughter entertained and pleaſed me by their ſolicitude and friendly converſation. I was happy till the moment when the unruly deſire of knowledge roſe in my breaſt. Then the melody of the birds and the ruſtling of the waters charmed me no more, and I ſung no morning ſong to the God of my fathers. Storms and tempeſts

pests raged about my head, and I was disgusted with the bland conversation of my family. Now must I walk bent under burdens, and the cruel driver that walks behind me calls me his beast. My bones almost break beneath heavy loads, the parching sun drives the sweat from my brow, and moistens my beard; and my tears frequently quench my consuming thirst."

The old man, being satisfied with Mahal's strength and industry, did not fail to instruct him at each scanty meal, and even condescended once to let him accompany his nephew to the school of Irad, that he might plainly see the value of *gold*, and acknowledge the god of its inhabitants.

When he arrived at this school, he saw a true picture of misery and starvation in rags and tatters, who had hired himself for bread and a dwelling to instruct the youths of the Iradians in the sole science which they wanted to learn. He stood on an elevated chair: children of various sizes were seated round him, and behind them such of their parents as wished to convince themselves of the progress their boys had made. The science of the Iradians was already completed, and compres-

ed within ſo ſmall a circle, that it was explained in common ſayings or maxims, pretty ſimilar to what we now call moral precepts; but with this difference, that the Iradians followed thoſe maxims practically, while we generally content ourſelves with the mere theory of modern ethics.

THE ragged ſchoolmaſter, having a good while exerted his voice and lungs upon the ſubject of Iradian ſcience, aſked the boys, one by one, the following queſtions to try their attention, and to convince the parents of the improvement they made under his tuition.

Queſtion. WHAT is the ſupreme good men ought to aim at?

Anſwer. GOLD.

Q. WHY is it gold?

A. BECAUSE it alone leads men to the means of true happineſs, to the eſteem of their fellow-citizens, to univerſal enjoyment and genuine perfection.

Q. WHAT ſhould therefore be the chief end of every rational man in this ſhort and miſerable life?

A. To

A. To amaſs gold.

Q. Very well, child! But tell me, are all the means tending to gain and amaſs gold equally good and lawful?

A. They are all equally good, if they anſwer the chief end; but not all lawful.

Q. How ſhould the prudent man therefore regulate his conduct?

A. If he make uſe of means prohibited by law, he ſhould take care to do it ſlily, or in ſuch a manner at leaſt, that the law may not apply to his caſe. As this conduct is very difficult, and premiſes great talents and experience, it is conſequently more eſteemed by one's fellow citizens than the uſe of direct and common means.

Q. Capital, my dear! But let your neighbour tell me, whether one may commit murder for the ſake of gold?

A. No; and that for one's own benefit, as nobody would otherwiſe be able long to keep his gold ſafe from the attempts of his fellow-citizens.

Q. Is there not a ſcience which makes a very

very essential means of getting and procuring gold? and what is its name?

A. ARITHMETIC, or the science of numbery.

Q. How should a man regulate his conduct in respect to strangers and foreigners in general?

A. STRANGERS and foreigners may and ought to be cheated for the love of gold and our country. They may also be subdued by war, reduced to slavery, fed with as much as is necessary to keep them alive, and forced to work. Should they resist compulsion, under the pretence of injustice and violence, they may be lawfully put to death as traitors to the state; but the best way to kill them would be by working, because work fetches gold.

Q. WHAT is the highest virtue?

A. WEALTH.

Q. WHAT is the blackest crime, the vilest infamy?

A. POVERTY.

Q. How do we call the thing that has no gold?

A. WORTHLESS.

A. WORTHLESS. It is not even counted among human beings, since it is a mere tool in the hands of him who has got gold. Many go so far as to deny it all sense and reason.

Q. AND very justly too! But pray, what do you call one in rags, if he has got gold?

A. A WONDER and prodigy of all goodness, favour, beauty, and perfection: he is a sage and a sultan among men.

Q. VERY true, children! Make it then your business to get as rich as your parents, and you will be saved for ever. Now I could wish to know, what deserves the highest reverence in the universe?

A. GOLD.

Q. WHY?

A. BECAUSE it is the most perfect being in the universe, and grants every perfection to its possessors.

Q. WHAT is gold?

A. IT is the god we worship.

Q. WHY do we worship him?

A. BECAUSE

A. Because he makes us happy; and man is born for happineſs, or at leaſt ſhould be happy.

Q. Are there no other gods beſides him?

A. Yes; there is one called the old inviſible God.

Q. Should we alſo pay homage to him?

A. It could not hurt us, ſince he is ſaid to have made gold. Our anceſtors alſo ſaid, that he has power, if he chooſes, to help men to the poſſeſſion of gold. It may perhaps have been ſo in their time; but now he gives away nothing to any body, and every one muſt ſtrive to gain gold by his own labour or cunning. As the homage paid him conſiſts, however of mere words and thoughts, it may be cheaply afforded him.

Q. Are the nations around us of our way of thinking?

A. All clear ſighted and enlightened nations, be they far or near, think and act as we do, and worſhip the ſame god; yet they are not all ſo ſincere as openly to avow their ſentiments as we do. Moſt of them are hypocrites, and the Iradian alone is honeſt enough to tell his mind. *Schoolmaſter.*

Schoolmaſter. Very well, my dear diſciples; your parents, I hope are contented with you, and through you with me; for I need their approbation.

Now the ragged and emaciated teacher began the following prayer with great enthuſiaſm, while the eyes of every one of his pupils were fixed with rapturous devotion at the word GOLD, which was painted on the wall above his chair:

"MOST ſplendid and moſt excellent Gold! thou that ſhineſt in the viſible creation, like the ſun in the vaults of heaven, when thou inveſteſt him at day break with thy fair, radiant robe! Without thee he would plunge into obſcurity; and as ſoon as thou diveſteſt him of thy borrowed garments, he ceaſes to be, and reſembles the wretch that has not found grace in thine eyes. But that we might worſhip thee amidſt the black ſhades of night, thou haſt covered numberleſs ſtars with thy reſulgent brilliancy. O, that we could aſcend to the ſun, and the planets, and the fixed ſtars to rob them of their unneceſſary and precious habiliments! King, chief of all nature, to whom all mankind bend the knee, from the mighty ſultan to the ſhivering beggar! for whom, and in whom is all life! thou diſtributeſt

tributeſt all the virtues, all the perfections!— Thou poureſt life's choiceſt enjoyments over thy eleſt favourites. Alas! I am none of their number. All that men invent and produce, comes through and by thee. Man without thee, would live with the ferocity of wild beaſts. Thou haſt firſt developed the capacities of his mind, the inſtincts of his heart, and the ſtrength of his body; and to thee he owes all the fruits of his underſtanding and his art. For thee the thinker wakes whole nights; for thee the ploughman ſweats in the field; for thee the warrior ſcorns his noble life, that he may at once taſte it in plenitude. the joys of life ſurround all thoſe whom thou haſt elected. All are working, growing, and exiſting to gratify their ſenſes. Thou art their god, and Voluptuouſneſs, thy daughter, is their goddeſs. For them blooms the tender virgin; like the young roſe that expands her buds, they pluck her at the firſt ſign of maturity, from the ſtem of innocence on which her mother has reared and guarded her for thy ſake. For them the earth bears fruit and herbs, the ſea feeds them with rare fiſhes, the woods with delicate game, and the air with dainty fowls. The only complaints thy favourites have to urge, is, that their

ſenſes

ſenſes are not more numerous, and that thoſe they have, loſe their reliſh and energy by enjoyment. But even then they find conſolation in thy dazzling and cheering radiancy.—For thou granteſt them wit, authority, reſpect power, and impunity; and there is nothing that thy poſſeſſors may not attempt. High and proud may they carry their heads; thoſe whom thou rejecteſt creep before them in the duſt, are trampled under foot, and look up from the duſt to thy divinely choſen!

"O BEING of beings! Creator of all arts and ſciences! Thou ſpring of ſociety! Great and moſt puiſſant enchanter! Like the greateſt monarch in the creation, thou throneſt in its centre, and attracteſt by thy tranſcendant luſtre all the beings remarkable for wit, ſpirit, and art! The very ſon of raw ignorance, that only lives through his animal inſtinct, ſmiles if thy rays encircle him; the darkneſs of ignorance turns ſerene, and animal inſtinct grows refined. All the ſocial beings move in thy ſphere, and each of them ſtrains every nerve to outſtrip his neighbour, in order to be the neareſt to thy ſanctuary!

"WITHOUT thee, powerful enchanter, the wheels of ſociety would ſuddenly ſtand ſtill;

ſtill; all the virtues would vaniſh with the crimes and the death of all moral powers would ſpeedily enſue. O Gold, thou toilſome object of human purſuit! to thee virgins and matrons ſell their chaſtity, the thinker the truth, the ſtateſman his ſultan and his country, the magiſtrates juſtice, the monarch the lives and happineſs of his ſubjects! For thy ſmiles, the man of underſtanding condeſcends to be the ſcoff of the fool, and even flatters him! For thee pride curbs its iron neck, and exerciſes its tongue in ſmooth adulation! For thee I ſell to the wiſe and noble citizens of Irad the days of my life, and ſtill thou flieſt me, and my gain is ſtale bread and taſteleſs water!

"Thou makeſt man endure all! by thee the coward becomes brave, and the idle active! Thou diſpelleſt even the black horrors of death, the ſad lot of humanity, which beſides its plaguing precurſors, not even thy favourites can eſcape, were they raiſed in the centre of thy magnificence. They muſt die like us wretched paupers; they muſt part with thy beam for the eternal darkneſs of the grave: but in defiance of death and its horrors, what exploits will not thy favourites atchieve for thy ſake?

"O most

"O most glorious and most sublime God! look down graciously upon thy chosen people! illumine me with the bright rays of thy splendor! shun our neighbours and be alone and exclusively our god! No people on earth worship thee as we do! By thee the Iradian coveteth dominion over all nations and will surely obtain it, if thou be propitious! Descend upon us potent God! and since we shall not be able to overcome by thy power the grim tyrant death and his plaguy attendants, bear with us, and remain faithful and auspicious to those whom we must leave behind us, and to whom we shall bequeath what thou hast granted us of thy divine substance."

The Caliph. How did Mahal behave during this execrable, blasphemous lesson?

Ben Hafi. Justly your highness calls its execrable; but it is still more execrable, that in the most execrable things that can be fancied or asserted of men, there is always more truth than one supposes. As to Mahal he heard this new doctrine at first with trembling surprise, then with grief, and at last with rage. He gave way to this passion, upbraided the Iradians in strong terms, with their folly, announced to them the wrath of the Almighty,

his

his miſſion, and their impending deſtruction.

THE whole audience cried, "Is the beaſt of burden mad? How durſt this worthleſs thing rave, that has nothing but the ſhape and tongue of a man? It raves hereſy, and corrupts our youth! *(To the Schoolmaſter.)* Give us rods that we may chaſtiſe this monſter before our children. We will teach it how to behave before men."

THE teacher brought rods: the boys fell upon Mahal, ſtripped him with wanton petulance, and were juſt going to lacerate his broad back, when a meſſenger of ſtate ſtepped in, and informed the company, that Mahal muſt immediately follow him to Sultan Zobar.

The Caliph. I am very glad of this. I do not like to ſee any man flogged, not even in a tale; I feel every ſtroke they give him.

Ben Haſi. Peace be with you, friend of mankind! But methinks you did not ſeem to feel that pity when Ram was flogged at Enoch.

The Caliph. This is quite a different caſe. This Ram was a blaſphemous and falſe traitor, who attacked the government of the Sultan of Enoch and his Viziers.

Ben

Ben Hafs. Dread Lord, your remark is forcible to my underſtanding. My tale is ended for this night, and I crave permiſſion to go to reſt.

The Caliph. Peace be with thee, Ben Hafs! Thy prayer is granted.

EIGHTH

EIGHTH EVENING.

BEN HAFI arrived in due time, unrolled his manuſcript, and thus continued his ſtory.

THE Iradians, dread ſucceſſor of the Prophet, anſwered the ſultan's meſſenger who came to fetch Mahal: "Let us firſt chaſtiſe him; he is an heretic, and was juſt blaſpheming the god of our country. You ſee he is only the beaſt of burthen of this youth's uncle, let us firſt ſcourge him well, then he ſhall follow you."

The Meſſenger. Never mind but let him inſtantly go. The Sultan is in a very great paſſion, and will no doubt give him his due. Beſides, ſhould he even get clear off from his Highneſs, you will always have plenty of leiſure to ſcourge him.

The Iradians. You acknowledge then the right we have to whip him, though he is ſummoned to appear before the Sultan?

As

As the meſſenger did not in the leaſt diſpute this right, they quietly delivered up Mahal into his hands.

Zobar, the Sultan of Irad, had received the following Meſſage from Sultan Pooh of Enoch:

"We Pooh I. Sultan of Enoch, the magnificent the grand, the divine, deſcended in ſtraight and ſpotleſs line from the ſons of God Aza and Azael, by our mother the fair Naamah—Theſe mighty ſpirits, placed around the throne of the old god, begot our great anceſtor, the terror of the old world, with the beauteous Naamah, the offspring of Cain. The power, the force, the wiſdom, and magic which they imparted to our anceſtor, were fully tranſmitted to us. We therefore, the deſcendant of God, ſend to Zobar, Sultan in Irad, begotten of man, and born of woman, health and greeting.

"We require thee, by theſe preſents to ſend us immediately to our ſuperb city of Enoch, the moſt ancient and moſt celebrated on earth, Mahal the man of the old mountain, of the generation of Seth. This man of the mountain has committed a daring outrage againſt our majeſty: nevertheleſs we pardoned him,

him, since he is related to us through our Sultaness his daughter; and we intended to have raised him to one of the first dignities in our empire. But whereas he has taken flight from our superb city, and resides, as we learn by our emissaries, in thy country; we do not doubt thy readiness and compliance, and shall acknowledge the service. The expences we will pay as it is meet for our liberality to do. The rulers of men owe each other such reciprocal services, that the offenders against their majesty may find no asylum or protection on the wide earth. We recommend thee to the keeping of our divine ancestor, the mighty Gedim.

"Done in our superb city of Enoch, in the third moon of the year one thousand five hundred and seventy-six.

(Signed) POOH,

"Son of the Sons of God Aza and Azael, Sultan of Enoch the most ancient city in the world."

When Sultan Zobar had read this message he was going to kill the bearer on the spot.—He already grasped his mighty spear, when his courtiers prostrated themselves, and supplicated to him to moderate his choler. Pooh's messenger

meſſenger alone ſtood ſtill, and recollecting the dignity of him that had ſent him, ſpiritedly ſaid: "Kill me Sultan of Irad, if you do not reſpect a Sultanic meſſenger, and prove that you do not know what you owe to your own ſtation."

THIS bold remonſtrance ſoon made Zobar think of other means: he recollected the dignity which a Sultan ought to keep up before his court, diſmiſſed the meſſenger from his preſence, and peruſed the meſſage once more, which only ſerved to augment his rage. He violently ſhook his ſpear, and none of the ſurrounding courtiers could as yet gueſs the real cauſe of his indignation He finally iſſued orders to go in ſearch of Mahal; and all the meſſengers now gave chaſe to our mountaineer, who being among the beaſts of burden, they had a great deal of trouble to find him out by their enquiries. At laſt they brought him before the offended monarch, who ſtood in the middle of the audience hall reſting on his lance, and with a wild ſtare thus addreſſed Mahal: "Quickly tell me who thou art, whence thou comeſt, and in what manner thou gaveſt offence to the ſottiſh Pooh? How thou, worthleſs thing, cameſt into this city, and what thou doeſt to live? I remember

to have seen thee once before talking nonsense."

Mahal. My name is Mahal. I spring from Seth and the thirst for knowledge drove me, a foolish man from the mountain of innocence and tranquility.

Sultan Zebar. Pshaw! idle talk! Thou didst well to come hither to the fountain of knowledge and wisdom. My people trade and deal with all the nations of the earth, cheat them all, and none knows the value of gold of well as the Iradians.

Mahal. This I have found to my sorrow. I descended from the mountain with my daughter slept in a cavern, and armed men took her from me. I returned sad to the mountain, murmured, and still longed to see the vallies, the cities, and their inhabitants. The Creator of the world appeared to me, chid me for my complaints, and sent me off again to learn to know men. Alas! I have seen them! The Lord also told me how wroth he was against them, and that he had resolved their destruction, unless they changed for the better.

Sultan Zebar. He must be very wroth indeed! We too well feel how hard it is to get gold.

gold. Yet we are the beſt people on earth, and he cannot mean to threaten us —Go on.

Mahal. Arrived at Enoch, I found my daughter married to the Sultan of the country. I was very much aſtoniſhed to find him a puny weak and peeviſh being, inſtead of a robuſt, powerful and huge giant. Perceiving that little Pooh ſuffered himſelf to be called God before his ignorant ſubjects, his impious pride rouſed my indignation, and I vindicated the cauſe of the true God in the face of the people of Enoch, and publicly expoſed the Sultan's folly.

Sultan Zobar. (With a loud burſt of laughter which was re-echoed in louder peals among the crowd of his courtiers.) Well done, Mahal! O the puny wretch! Behold me, man of the mountain, and ſee the difference! The ſpirit which animates me is felt by all, as far as the roaring ſea which daſhes its billows upon the coaſt of my empire! He a ſon of God! Give me leave to know better.—I who invented the ſword, the ſpear and the ſhield, who broke the ſteed and trained him for war—I, who am ſo nearly related to the Gods, muſt ſurely know his mongrel pedigree."

Mahal

Mahal was much frightened at these words, and smiled bitterly. Zobar however construing his smile in his own favour, thus went on: "Thou hast done right to check his mad presumption. Suppose Gedim descended from the gods, the effeminate race of the Enochers has long ago degenerated, and is become ignoble and obscure. What are Aza and Azael to Alhazal, the god of war, the teacher and father of my house? His valour and courage concentrate in me, and I am on earth what he is in heaven. If he carries on the wars of the old God against the rebellious spirits in heaven, I carry on those of the earth, for the young, fair and splendid god Gold. But your Pooh is a common understrapper, and I'll be avenged of the rascal — Tell me thou thread-bare thing, how didst thou escape starvation in Irad?"

Mahal. I serve a hard-hearted old man for my daily bread as his beast of burden, and till his field.

Sultan Zobar. Since my mother is descended from Seth, I will protect thee. Thou hast my leave to remain in Irad as a beast of burden.

Ben Hasi. Mahal thought this a strange kindness, but would not evince his surprise at

at such unexpected favour. He ventured however, to complain of the inhabitants of Irad, who wanted to scourge him for having spoken against their god.

Sultan Zobar. Blaspheme Gedim the god of Pooh as much as thou pleasest, but never dare attack again the god Alfazul, my ancestor, nor Gold the god of my people. By these we live. Since thou hast told the truth to Pooh, and thy daughter is a sultaness, I pardon thee this once, and will take thy broad back under my protection. Depart till I send for thee. Work and strive hard to appease the god of my people, to gain his bright favour, and endeavour to acquire the name of man in this empire.

MAHAL returned to his old master, who severely took him to task for his heresy in the school, and bitterly reproached himself with having brought a beast of burden in the company of reasonable men.

ZOBAR withdraw with his Grand Vizier to an adjoining apartment, and read Pooh's message. The Vizier turned pale, and uttered the most shocking invectives against the arrogant ruler of Enoch.

ZOBAR

ZOBAR, who had listened to his minister with a smile, now said to him: "Let us make war upon this Pooh, rob him of his country, of his gold and his subjects, and dash his idols to pieces. This bold message will inflame the resentment of the Iradians, and the war will give me the keys of their imprisoned god. I'll once make them poor, I'll buy their pretended rights with their own gold, and purchase them on my own terms."

THE Grand Vizier applauded this resolution; the Divan was summoned to meet; and Pooh's message being read to them, they called out with one voice: War! Plunder! Devastation! Death!

SULTAN ZOBAR then gave orders to dispatch the following message to Pooh:

"SULTAN ZOBAR, whose valour is the proverb of the world; Zobar, the ruler of the rich and spirited Iradians, the son of the God Alfazil, the inventor of spears, swords and shields, the tamer of the steel, the leader of bloody battles. Our ancestor carries on the wars of the old God against the rebellious spirits in heaven: We, his descendant, march to combat against those who offend

offend us on earth—We, the Saltan Zobar, with whom no earthly prince durſt compare himſelf, ſend thee, ſon of duſt, our ſovereign hatred and contempt. Behold! we arm ourſelves with murder and deſolation, to be revenged of thee for having called thyſelf the ſon of the mighty ſpirits of heaven; likewiſe for having dared to call us, in whoſe form the godſhip of our anceſtor is plainly expreſſed, *a mortal man!* Us, who by our dread exploits have proved our origin! who poſſeſs the magic art to rule men as we do!

"HOWEVER, the days are not many, ere we ſhall prove to thee by a ſuperior ſpirit and bloody feats what thou art, and who we are. We are arming; and thou, thy fair city, and thy gold, with that of thy ſubjects, ſhall be our booty. We will deliver the god we worſhip from thy vile bondage; nor will we lay down our ſpear before thou ſhalt have acknowledged our divinity and thy mortal frailties. Mahal, the man of the mountain, who ſought refuge among us, thou ſhalt not have.

"ZOBAR."

A declaration of war was immediately iſſued throughout the empire of Irad, and the people took up arms, and collected in ſtrong bodies. Zobar, being ready to take the field,

ſent

sent again for Mahal, and thus spoke to him:

"Man of the mountain! As thou art an offspring of Seth thou shalt march with me and my brave warriors into the heart of Pooh's dominions. It will cost me something to keep thee in food, and gold is too scarce to give away. As Pooh is thy son in-law thou mayest perhaps serve me in exciting the malecontents of Enoch against him, and this honour is thy reward. Be valiant in battle, and strive to take as much booty as will make thee a man in Irad.

Mahal who had observed the great preparations that were making by the Iradians, but dared not ask what they were for, as he knew the people despised him too much to give him an answer, now asked the Sultan with his wonted simplicity: "What is war?"

Sultan Zobar was much surprised at this simple question; but being in good humour at the happy progress of his secret wishes, he condescended to make the following reply:

"Blockhead! Thou askest what war is! It is the darling game of the Sultans, in which their subjects stake their lives and properties,

and

and the ſurvivers bring home ſcars, wounds, and laurels of renown. The Sultans alone can be winners. War is the nobleſt paſſion, the great hunt of mankind, which is the privilege of Sultanic ſportſmen. As for the reſt, you will ſoon ſee how it goes."

Mahal. But why do you play this ſanguinary game, in which your ſubjects ſtake their all, and you alone are the winner?

Sultan Zobar. O the ſimple thing! Suppoſe I were to tell thee it is for thy ſake?

Mahal. For my ſake! Then you may as well let it alone. Ill treated as I am by your people, I don't wiſh them the game you will play at their ſole expence.

Sultan Zobar. It is not quite ſo much for thy ſake that I ſhould fight for thee without good recompenſe; thy ſeeking refuge here is only the accidental occaſion of it. Sultan Pooh demanded thee by his meſſage, and, by the brightneſs of Gold! I would have ſurrendered thee that inſtant—for what ſhould I care for ſuch a fool? had he not offended me by calling himſelf a ſon of God, and me a mortal man. Now his ſubjects ſhall pay for it; we will kill and rob them, raviſh their wo-

 men,

men, lay waſte their country, and thou ſhalt rejoice with me at the havoc of my vengeance. Get thee gone, and arm thyſelf.

MAHAL retired in a deep reverie, and ſaid to himſelf: "Becauſe I would not become a mutilated judge at Enoch, and Pooh has offended this terrible madman, ſhall the ſubjects of both countries cut each others throats, and the greater cut-throat become the ruler?—What a man am I to have viſited theſe people, and have occaſioned ſuch dire ſcenes? The Lord bade me ſearch the ſource of human actions; I ſee it, but cannot trace its origin. The words Ram taught me, ſhow, that the inſtincts of men are bad. But why muſt they have bad inſtincts? Such as they are, they are not good for much. But why are they ſo? Could not they be better?"

MAHAL now followed Zobar at the head of his army. Entering the enemy's territory, they ſurpriſed the cottagers and townſmen in their dwellings, laid waſte the cultivated fields, murdered the men, and raviſhed the women on the heaps of the ſlain. This horrid ſcene made Mahal's heart bleed: his tears rolled down his beard, and he exclaimed:—"What monſters are they that ravage the earth,

earth, and kill its inhabitants like ſheep! Lord, thou haſt put off too far the term of their deſtruction! Haſten to conſummate thy decree!"

To the Sultan he ſaid: "Have theſe unfortunate beings likewiſe offended thee by a meſſage, that thou ſhouldeſt ſlay or cauſe them to be ſlain?"

Sultan Zohar (ſurveying the field of carnage and devaſtation with the contented look of the reaper that views the ſheaves he has cut down). The nations muſt expiate the folly of their Sultans. Kill, rob, and hold thy tongue, that thou mayeſt become a being to be reckoned among men.

MAHAL moaned over the bodies of the ſlain. "Nations," ſaid he, "muſt expiate the folly of their Sultans! What terrible new words muſt I hear! And why? why ſhould Sultans rage, and nations ſuffer that are guiltleſs? But which are the greater fools, thoſe who cut each others throats for two madmen, or the two madmen who with one word excite nation to exterminate nation? Lord, explain this to me, or let my ſpirit become as obſcure as the darkneſs which covered the

chaos

chaos before thou createdſt the world! Are theſe men like me? How can they be ſo cruel and profligate, yet at the ſame time execute ſo many good and great enterpriſes? Thou, Lord, art great, mighty and perfect; but ſomething muſt be deranged in theſe men, and in this thy creation. There muſt be a defect ſomewhere, but this ſomewhere is hidden from reaſon."

The Caliph. Your Mahal now runs on as madly as thoſe idolaters.

Ben Haſi. This is the reſult of his inquiries; and the man who ſcrutinizes the myſterious ways in which God leads the human race, will never meet with better ſucceſs.

The Caliph. God is great! In him is the beginning and the end.

Ben Haſi. Sultan Pooh almoſt burſt with choler, when he read Zobar's anſwer to his meſſage. It cut him through the very heart. But as ſoon as he heard of the vaſt warlike preparations making by his bold and implacable enemy, his fright nearly killed him. The warm intereſt which his courtiers and the majority of his ſubjects teſtified in his cauſe, at laſt made him recover his ſpirits. They all took

took the inſult to themſelves, and their humanity could not bear that any one ſhould doubt the divinity of their chief. The Enochers reckoned it the higheſt glory to be governed by a ſon of God. They of courſe did every thing that was in the power of men and ſubjects. An army was quickly collected; but it was a circumſtance much to be regretted, that the ſon of God did not himſelf poſſeſs a little more real manhood, and that he had trained the chiefs of his warriors more in the ceremonials of his court, than in thoſe movements and evolutions which ſerve to render an army victorious. But this was never thought of; they truſted in the Sultan's godſhip, in the juſtice of his cauſe, brought offerings to Gedim his anceſtor; and when Zobar had laid waſte all their frontiers, they began to march againſt him. Sultan Pooh, not having fixed any ceremonial for his auguſt perſon in the field, and finding the time would be too ſhort to plan one, thought proper to ſtay at home, where he went on in his uſual way as long as it would laſt.

Sultan Zobar was charmed with the ſight of Pooh's army. He called out to his warriors: "Victory! Behind theſe cowards lies Enoch! There lies your God! Behold

his ſplendour! Rouſe, and rid him from bondage!"

These words did more wonders than the word of Liberty does among the nations after the flood. Pooh's army was cut down by the Iradians high inſpired by their glittering God. Mahal ſtood on a hill, murmuring and complaining. "It cannot be right," cried he, "with thoſe Sultans, and thoſe men who ſuffered themſelves to be ſlaughtered for them! There is a flaw ſomewhere; and this horrid, barbarous, and at the ſame time admirable creature man cannot be quite complete!"

The Caliph. It is ſo, Ben Hafi. The completion is beyond the grave: in the gardens of that world, there we ſhall firſt become what we ought to be; and there every one will be rewarded as he merits. Mahal ſhould have thought of all this.

Ben Hafi. Lord of Believers, before the Flood they had not the book which teaches us happier men thoſe doctrines of promiſe, and renders millions ſo patient and tame in this life.

The Caliph. Well, if they had not that book, they were not deſerving of it.

Ben

Ben Haſi. When Sultan Zobar ſat down with his army before Enoch; when his warriors took it by ſtorm; killed all the inhabitants, who on their knees begged for their lives; plundered and ſet fire to it; and Zobar, exulting in his triumph, beheld the terrible ſcene; Mahal thus exclaimed amidſt the groans of the dying: "Juſtly, O Lord, didſt thou ſay, The earth is horrid, it ſtill ſmokes with the blood of the ſlain! Behold Enoch! Ah, why make the fair earth thus long a prey to murder and devaſtation? And all this happens becauſe Mahal deſcended from the mountain! Is it for this that man ſhould ſlay his brother? Is it for this women, children and old men muſt die? Is it for this the cultivated fields, the fine dwellings, and this beautiful city ſhould be ravaged? Is it becauſe Mahal, inſpired by thee, called them idolaters, and becauſe the ſanguinary Zobar will not be called man? Indeed he has nothing human in him; and ſurely the evil ſpirit that rebelled againſt thee, and ſeduced our firſt mother in the garden of innocence, muſt have begotten him. Perhaps, Lord, it is thy will that thoſe people who forſook thee puniſh one another with their own hands!—Perhaps it is thy will to purge the earth in

this manner, from a race which it repenteth thee to have made, because it answers so badly thy secret ends! Perhaps thou wilt produce a new race more obedient to thy will."

While the city of Enoch was consuming in smoke and flames, Mahal saw his daughter and son in law brought before Sultan Zobar. Shocked as he was at the horrors before him, his heart could not help whispering to him in this moment: "Behold, this is the man who wanted thy life, because thou toldest him the truth! This the undutiful daughter, who became faithless to her husband's bed, and would have had thee mutilated! God is just!"

Pooh and his wife appeared before Zobar with all the dignity of their elevated station: and Mahal makes the following remarks on their deportment: "The Ex-Sultan Pooh stood as stiff and as gravely majestic before his conqueror, as I saw him the first time on his throne. I was quite amazed at it, and should suppose there must be a quite different spirit in the man born to be a Sultan." Of Milka he says: "Her pride melted, when she saluted Zobar, into a smile softer and more attractive than I ever remarked in her on the mountain."

Sultan Zobar now reprehended Pooh for his conduct, in harsh, severe and insolent expressions. "How," asked he, "could such a miserable shade of a sultan call himself divine, and me, his great and invincible vanquisher, a son of man?"

Pooh answered in a firm and proud tone of language; and, to give energy to what he said, his little form grew more inflated at every word, and he raised it as high as he could, by standing on his toes. "That I am a son of God," answered he, "will appear from the manner in which I bear my reverses! That thou art a son of man, appears from the manner in which thou behavest in the flush of thy temporal successes."

Zobar now roared: "We will soon beat thy godship out of thee; meanwhile I use the first rights of my triumph before thy staring eyes. Thy wife is fair, a daughter of Seth; here is her father, who vainly chid thee for thy folly: she shall be my wife."

Milka readily gave her hand to Zobar. Pooh looked after her; and, turning round to Mahal, "The greatest torment I feel," said he, "is that I could not avenge the outrage

rage thou haſt committed againſt me and my anceſtor."

The Caliph. Sultan Pooh, making allowance for his idolatry, is ſtill a great man, and worthier of the throne than his overbearing victor.

Ben Hoſ. Mahal, regardleſs of this greatneſs, only viewed his pride, and ſaid to himſelf, "Infatuated wretch! He ſees his ſubjects murdered, his city burnt, his empire laid waſte, his wife taken from him; and only repines at not having killed me, who reproached him with the preſumption that cauſed his downfal!"

THE Ex-Sultan Pooh bore all with firmneſs; but when ſome warriors brought in the huge head of Gedim's image and that of his own, and contemptuouſly threw them at Zobar's feet, he ſhed a flood of tears. Zobar ſarcaſtically aſked, "Why he wept over the deſtruction of thoſe lifeleſs idols, and coolly ſaw all his ſubjects deſtroyed?" Pooh was ſtruck dumb with grief, wrapped up his face, and would not look at the beheaded ſtones.

THAT a conqueror like Zobar did not quit Enoch till it reſembled a deſert, every one

one will conceive that has read the hiſtory of ancient and modern conquerors. The ſurviving Enochers were driven into ſlavery as beaſts of burthen, and he then made his triumphal entry into Irad. Rejoicings and general thankſgiving for the happy concluſion of the war were then celebrated, and every Iradian was glad for ſome time to have augmented his pelf; but when the expences of the war were levied on the people, they found themſelves much behind hand, and the Sultan alone was gainer in the bloody game.

Sultan Posh was now ordered to confeſs publicly, before the Sultan and his people, the repentance he felt at having offended Zobar, and to own that the latter alone was of divine origin. But no brilliant hope, no threats, no inſults, not inſtant death itſelf, could make him condeſcend to ſuch humiliation. Firm and unſhaken, he faced the inſulting people; and the more they preſſed him to ſave his life by thoſe means, the louder he exclaimed, "I am the ſon of the gods Aza and Azael! Their ſpirit lives in me! Kill me, and make me like them!"

The Caliph. A ſultan always remains a ſultan, though he have loſt his throne.

Ben

Ben Hafi. He continued to cry up his godſhip, and called Zobar a *ſon of man.*—The provoked populace would have torn him in pieces, had not the Sultan's guards kept them off, and protected him. Zobar, deſpairing of reducing his proud captive by threats and inſults, would now try what miſery and hunger could do. This revenge appeared ſweeter to him than putting him to death at once. He ordered Pooh to be guarded in ſight, and to live as a worthleſs thing at Irad. He was convinced, that his ſubjects would treat him like every thing which their god had abandoned. The peeviſh Ex-Sultan now found himſelf ſuddenly in the ſame ſituation in which we ſaw Mahal when he firſt arrived at Irad. But Mahal was now at court; and though his daughter ſmiled on him on all occaſions, yet he could never forget her unworthy project to have him mutilated.

Pooh was obliged to wander through the inhoſpitable ſtreets, without ſhelter, without ſuſtenance, a prey to contempt and deriſion. Mahal could not help pitying him, and offered him his former ſituation with the old taſk-maſter, to ſave him from abſolute ſtarvation. "Conduct me," anſwered Pooh, "to your old

old man; even there I will prove that I am a ſultan. Though my back bend under burthens, yet my ſpirit ſhall never bend to the will of an ignoble pretender of mortal pedigree!"

MAHAL ſmiled, conducted the Ex Sultan to the old farmer, and preſented him as a beaſt of burthen. "Ah," ſaid the taſkmaſter, "this meagre, puny thing might have done very well for a ſultan; for what would not do for ſuch a place in our times? But, by the glitter of our God! he will make a very bad beaſt of burthen. I ſuppoſe he will not want ſo much food—Thou waſt a great gobbler, Mahal—yet we will try it. I am always at liberty to turn him off when I pleaſe."

SULTAN POOH was now tilling the field, and ſtrutting with loads to the market place, with the ſame ſultanic dignity which he formerly diſplayed among his courtiers. Neither the inſults of the Iradians, nor the pain and conſtraint which his efforts occaſioned, in ſhort, nothing could caſt down his proud ſpirit. Sultan Zobar permitted him as quietly to live in the old taſkmaſter's bondage as he once had Mahal, expecting that he would at length renounce and diſavow his divine li-

neage. But the following converſation between Mahal and Pooh will ſhow how ill theſe hopes were founded.

MAHAL went to ſee his ſon-in law at his leiſure time, and aſked him, "How he could be mad enough, in the ſituation he was in, to call himſelf a ſon of the gods, while human miſery preſſed him thus low?"

The Ex-Sultan. How would I bear thy queſtion, audacious man, were I not what I declare myſelf to be? Would I not puniſh thy inſolence with death?

Mahal. As for killing me, thou needeſt not be in a hurry. Thou only affecteſt generoſity becauſe thou haſt no command. Wert thou to attempt to kill me now, my arm would ſoon convince thee who is the ſtronger.

The Ex-Sultan. A ſultan's ſtrength does not conſiſt in a robuſt and heavy ſtructure; it conſiſts in his ſpirit.

Mahal. But where doſt thou ſhow that ſpirit, ſince thou haſt ceaſed to be Sultan?

The Ex-Sultan. In bearing life without my former power! in liſtening to thee without anger! in inhabiting this humid and dirty hole,

hole, too vile for a beaſt, a throne under the weight of my body!

Mahal. My fancy never went ſo far; but that of a ſultan muſt indeed be grand, to make a throne of a dunghill!

The Ex-Sultan. I, the only one of the divine offspring of Gedim, muſt live in pain, inſult and ignominy, that one of the divine race may ſtill remain on earth. And ſhould not my mighty anceſtors raiſe me again to my former grandeur, I ſhall always remain worthy of them in my humble ſtate.

Mahal. Hope carries you a great way, I find; that ſhows you are ſprung from men.

The Ex-Sultan. So hope muſt do. If I do but live to ſee the day that thy daughter brings forth a ſon, I ſhall die with the certainty that my ſon, the ſole heir of my anceſtors, the ſole heir of their great qualities, will rule after me the empire of my enemy. I know that Milka my ſpouſe is bleſt with an offspring from my body.

Mahal. Really? Are theſe thy hopes? I will now convince thee how wofully thy godſhip is miſtaken in the offspring. The

child

child of whom my criminal daughter is pregnant, is no doubt the baſtard of one of thy courtiers, with whom I found the perfidious Miika in the very act of adultery. When I upbraided her with the heinouſneſs of her crime, ſhe excuſed herſelf by telling me, that thou, ſon of the gods, waſt not able to bleſs her with an heir, and that ſhe did it for fear of being rejected from thy bed, as thou, impotent fool, hadſt done with former wives. How is it now with thy heir's godſhip?

The Ex-Sultan (ſomewhat aſhamed, then proudly). It is not true, becauſe it is impoſſible; and I would not believe it, had I ſeen it with my own eyes.

Mahal. And why? for the ſame reaſon, I ſuppoſe, which makes thee take this ſtinking ſtraw for a throne?

The Ex-Sultan. It is impoſſible that a ſon of man, a ſubject, ſhould touch the wife whom the Sultan has choſen! The gods, my anceſtors, would certainly have killed the profane for the mere idea of it.

Mahal. Thy gods were very quiet, however, when I ſurpriſed my faithleſs and undutiful daughter. And even now that Sultan Zobar,

Zobar, whom thou calleſt a man, has taken her for his wife, they are as quiet as they were then.

The Ex-Sultan. He is a ſultan, and no common man; which alters the caſe. And who knows what my anceſtors intend by it? For my part, I am very well ſatisfied, ſince my heir will ſurely reign after him in Enoch and Irad.

Mahal. And doſt thou think Zobar will preſer the baſtard to his other children?

The Ex-Sultan. My child is divine, and Gedim will take him under his protection.

Mahal. The protection which he granted thee, ought to make thy hopes leſs ſanguine—But thy taſkmaſter whiſtles. Go to work, for I find thou art an incorrigible fool. I ſhall however return once more, and do my beſt to reclaim thee from error and ſin to the true God, whom thou haſt forſaken.

It was decreed, Lord of Believers, that Mahal ſhould not convert Sultan Pooh. The former having returned to Irad without gold, Sultan Zobar had conceived a very bad opinion of his underſtanding, and did not like to

support him. He would, however, have kept him some time longer for the sake of Milka, had he not heard, that a rich Iradian had offered Mahal a large sum of that precious metal to intercst him in his cause, and to make him his advocate at the Sultan's court. It was, however, Mahal's answer to this suitor which undid him with Zobar. "If thy cause is just," said he to the rich man, "why offer me thy gold to seduce me from the true God, by giving me that which thou senselessly calleſt thy divinity? Never shall my hands touch this accursed metal, which you amass by deceitful, barbarous, and bloody deeds, and praise with blasphemous sentiments and prayers!"

Sultan Zobar, when he heard of this heresy, immediately ordered Mahal to be brought before him. "Wert thou not," said Zobar, "my spouse's father, I would have thee stoned to death. Get thee hence from my dominions; thou wilt not thrive at my court, nor in Irad. Thou art a stupid, worthless thing, and wilt remain so for ever. A man like thee might corrupt all my people! A man like thee is not worth his keep! My treasurer shall give thee a few favours of the

god

god thou disregardest, and then go to those fools that resemble thee!"

Mahal. I shake the dust off my feet, that I may carry nothing with me from this accursed city. Long have I lingered amidst this outcast nation. I despise thee, thy gold, and thy subjects, and implore on you all the vengeance of the true God, which is drawing nigh.

Sultan Zebar. I laugh at the contempt of a worthless thing, and only dread poverty.—Be gone, be gone! should the Iradians hear of thy blasphemy, they would kill both thee and me; for, powerful as I am, I dare not screen heretics from their just vengeance.

At these words the Sultan roughly pushed him out of doors, and Mahal raved with passion at not being allowed to reply. He was, however, obliged patiently to put up with the treatment he had received. Previous to his departure he wanted at least to give a last good lesson to his daughter, but she was not to be spoke with. He therefore left the palace, firmly resolved to return through the ravaged empire of Enoch to the old mountain. But on his way from the court, some armed men seized and carried him to the sea-shore, where

where they committed him to the care of a captain, whose ship was ready to set sail.

This will show you, Lord of Believers, that monarchs had recourse before the flood to the same means which they have used ever since, to get rid of those that are in their way.

Ben Hafi now rolled up his manuscript, and left the presence of the Caliph and his court.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

TRAVELS
BEFORE THE
FLOOD.

AN INTERESTING
ORIENTAL RECORD
OF MEN AND MANNERS IN THE
ANTIDILUVIAN WORLD,
INTERPRETED IN
Fourteen Evening Converſations
BETWEEN THE
CALIPH OF BAGDAD AND HIS COURT.

Tranſlated from the Arabic.

VOL. II.

LONDON Printed
CARLISLE, RE-PRINTED FOR A. LOUDON,
BOOKSELLER, BY GEO. KLINE. 1797.

NINTH EVENING.

Ben Haſt. MAHAL now found himſelf all at once in a quite ſtrange ſituation, in a quite new world. The boundleſs ocean rolling before him, the vaſt wooden caſtle which ſo ſecurely glided on it, and the buſtling of the ſeamen, ſtruck his ſenſes with a kind of aſtoniſhment hitherto unexperienced. He admired the ſtructure of the wooden machine, the ſkilful dexterity of the beings who ſteered it as they pleaſed, and repented in ſome degree of the imprecations with which he had loaded mankind.

HALF way on his paſſage to the empire of Gin a violent ſtorm and hurricane aroſe.—Trembling, he ſaw the ſeamen ſteer the ſhip with great compoſure and cold indifference through the roaring billows, that would now lift her mountain high, then ſink her into an abyſs. The howling of the hurricane, the

vivid flashes of the lightening, the tremendous peals of thunder, impressed him with the most awfully sublime sensations. He forgot in this moment all he had suffered from men; and was proud of being one of their species. The tempest at last subsided, and with it his admiration of the hardy crew that had thus boldly faced and weathered it out. Having rested themselves from their toil, they now gave way to all kinds of excesses, and made Mahal the principal object of their petulance and wanton sports. One seamen rivalled the other in harrassing and tormenting poor Mahal, who sincerely prayed for another storm to divert from him the attention and regards of the rude company. But he was not relieved till two days after, when several voices called out "Land! land!" The seamen were now too busy with making the harbour, and anticipating the pleasures which awaited them on shore, to take any farther notice of him

They now landed him with the rest of the passengers, and he soon saw himself in the centre of the rich and populous city of Gin. A great number of well-dressed inhabitants bustled through the streets, others stood collected in groups, and the whole place respired

ed friendlineſs, confidence, polite attention and hoſpitality. Mahal, who ſtill remembered the greedy looks of the Iradians, the horrors which they had committed at Enoch, and the ill uſuage he had met with on the part of the ſailors, felt ſome conſolation at the cheerful and promiſing ſcenes before him, and exclaimed to himſelf: "This ſeems to be a good and happy people. They ſurely do not worſhip gold, which tempts mankind to the perpetration of ſuch iniquitous deeds. How mild and fraternal is their intercourſe! How tranquil and pleaſed they go about! They ſeem ſo attentive, ſo reſpectful, ſo complaiſant to one another, and embrace ſtrangers with ſuch cordiality—Yes, it muſt be a good people, that does not merit the wrath of the Lord. I doubt not but they will give me a kind reception; but I will firſt aſk, if their Sultan makes himſelf paſs for a god; for, alas! all my misfortunes ſpring from thoſe too human beings in whom I expected to ſee ſo much greatneſs, and yet found ſo little." Mahal now made up to one of the inhabitants who had juſt taken a moſt tender leave of a friend, and, with all the ſmoothneſs and refinement he was maſter of, ſaid to him, "Will you permit a ſtranger to aſk you a queſtion?"

The Giner. I will anſwer you a thouſand if you pleaſe, friend, without being tired.

Mahal. I thank you; one will do for a beginning. Pray have you a ſultan here?

The Giner (ſmiling without raillery). To be ſure, my dear friend: a nation can as little diſpenſe with a ſultan as the earth with the ſun.

Mahal. That may be ſo, and I muſt believe your word; but tell me candidly if your ſultan calls himſelf a god?

The Giner. How ſhould he not be a god that reigns over gods?

Mahal (ſtarting). What gods? Over gods?

The Giner. Undoubtedly over gods! Did you drop down from the clouds, that you ſhould not recognize this dreſs, and know that ſo many as wear it, and are now upon this ſquare, are gods? What ſhould they be elſe?

MAHAL long ſtared at the Giner, as if he wanted to ſearch for ſome mark of his godſhip; at length he broke out with a deep ſigh— "And why ſhould not they be any thing elſe?"

The

The Giner. Becauſe they are Gods, and men dare not come in this ſquare.

Mahal. And why they dare not?

The Giner. Becauſe they are men.

Mahal. So you are not a man, but a god of this country?

The Giner. Certainly. Do not you ſee the blood-red trimmings of my garment? the flaming red croſs on my boſom?

Mahal. As I am not blind, I muſt ſee them; but do theſe make thee a god?

The Giner. No; it is only the diſtinctive mark of my being one of them. My divinity is owing to my deſcent from an ancient family called the elect, the ruling of Gin. We alone ſurround the Sultan's throne, and execute his orders. He is the ſun, we the ſtars.

Mahal. Are not thoſe gods who cultivate the fields?

The Giner (ſmiling). They are mere men, whom we command in the Sultan's name to do all that men can and ought to do, if they wiſh to live.

Mahal.

Mahal. And what is their buſineſs?

The Giner. You aſk very odd queſtions, but politeneſs bids me anſwer them. They ſow, plant, trade, build, and, by the labour of their hands, produce every thing belonging to the eaſe and comfort of life.

Mahal. And what ſort of work have you to do?

The Giner. We eat, drink, and live merry and careleſs, as gods ought to do.

Mahal. What, without any labour or trouble?

The Giner. Trouble enough to rule them! Trouble enough from our infancy to be incited by the glorious inſtinct of noble honour, to aſcend always one ſtep higher on a ladder where ſometimes too many of us put our feet at once together!

Mahal. To aſcend whither? To heaven where God dwells?

The Giner. To the Sultan's favour, in the gradation of the ranks which he diſtributes.

Mahal. Now I underſtand you, and have again learnt another new phraſe, *The glorious inſtinct*

inſtinct of noble honour! But tell me, how do thoſe look you call men among you?

The Giner. You will ſee many of them in the harbour and in the ſtreets. All thoſe who are not clad like me, you may poſitively take for men. Look, yonder is one ſneaking off along that row of houſes!

Mabal. What, is it he that ſo timidly preſſes againſt the wall, and dares not look into this ſquare?

The Giner. The very ſame. The path on which they are allowed to walk around this place is only one ell wide.

Mabal. But don't you ſee, that that man is formed exactly like theſe here?

The Giner. It appears ſo from the outſide, but the divine part is within.

Mabal. O Sultan Pooh!

The Giner. What do you ſay?

Mabal. I am only thinking of that ſilly fool of a Sultan, who is alſo a god, and now carries vegetables to market as a beaſt of burden, and ſleeps upon ſtinking ſtraw in a ſtable, which he takes for a throne.

The Giner. We have heard of his misfortune: but he is no god.

Mabal. What, not Pooh? Were you to tell him so, he would as little credit you, as you would me, were I to question your divine origin. But tell me how many are there here of them that call themselves gods, and how many of those you count men?

The Giner. There are some hundred families of our divine class: as to the number of men, it can only be ascertained by the treasurer and the tax-gatherers.

Mabal. What kind of people are these?

The Giner. They are officers of state, that levy on every man a fixed contribution of his property and goods, destined to support us and the Sultan, and to defray the expences of the government.

Mabal. And do those men suffer you to live in sloth and luxury without resistance? Do they bear those burdens without complaint?

The Giner. Why should they not? How could it be otherwise?

Mabal. But why should they? Why should the many toil for the few?

The

The Giner. Becauſe they are men, and we gods.

Mahal. Now, do you or they really fancy you are gods?

The Giner. Stranger, the Giner is polite and indulgent: this he owes to his gods, and his gods owe it to their Sultan. Your queſtion is very bold; beware therefore of putting it to any man in this empire. I give you this well-meant caution, leſt you ſhould rouſe the reſentment of the gods here, who are mild, kind, and forgive all but that. The preſervation of this flouriſhing ſtate, the preſervation of thoſe men themſelves, depends on that belief. Thoſe men have ſtrength, hands, and even reaſon; but of what uſe would it be if our ſpirit did not guide and direct them, and ſubdue their dangerous paſſions in ſuch a manner as to make them work and obey for our pleaſure and their own advantage? No nation in the world is richer, happier, more enlightened and politer than the Giners.

Mahal. And more paſſive, you ſhould have added.

The Giner. Why?

Mahal. Are they not extremely paſſive, ſince they can bear ſo many viſible gods?

The Giner. Through theſe gods they are become all they are, have learned all they know, and enjoy all they poſſeſs. This their gratitude will never forget.

Mahal. Pardon my ignorance! but I think you are only in joke.

The Giner. Could a God of *Gin* be capable of violating ſo far the politeneſs due to a ſtranger that honours us with a viſit? Your ill-founded ſuſpicion pains me, but I forgive you.

Mahal. You are very good.

The Giner. It is my duty. How elſe ſhould we reign over the children of men, if we were not as mild and as indulgent as we are juſt and ſevere?

Mahal. So you are ſevere too!

The Giner. Neceſſity, alas! compels us to it.

Mahal. Where is that neceſſity?

The Giner. The greater number eaſily makes itſelf formidable to the ſmaller.

Mahal. What ſhould gods have to fear from men?

The

The Giner (very ſeriouſly and gravely). Stranger, beware.

Mahal. Your earneſt ſits better on your countenance than your ſmiles; and ſhould you even become more ſerious, ſtill I ſhould believe you are only joking with me.

The Giner. Why?

Mahal. Becauſe you call yourſelf by that name, which I dare not even pronounce without offending Him who created this world and all the fools and wiſe men in it.

The Giner. Who is that?

Mahal. God.

The Giner. He is the Lord of ſpirits, and we are the lords of the earth we inhabit.

Mahal. Is not he your Lord?

The Giner. Yes; becauſe we are the beſt after the ſpirits who encompaſs his throne.

Mahal. O Adam! Father of mortals!

The Giner. He is not our father. Your origin is wrapt up in darkneſs. You had better be ſilent on the ſubject.

Mahal.

Mabal. I was reſolved to fly from this country as ſoon as I ſhould learn that it was governed by a Sultan who deems himſelf a ſon of the gods; but what I hear of you will make me tarry to diſcover the ſource of this ſtrange phenomenon. But I am helpleſs, and have brought nothing with me of the god of the Iradians, whom you probably may know.

The Giner. I do. But who, my friend, would refuſe you any ſuch act of kindneſs as giving you food and ſhelter? I am very ſorry that my houſe is not fitted up for the reception of gueſts. I tell you ſo with heartfelt regret: but each of the gods here will be glad to make you welcome.

Mabal. I thank you and them. I had rather be among thoſe whom you call men; they are perhaps the more hoſpitable.

The Giner. I doubt it much. But ſhould you find them as you preſume, beware of aſking them ſuch ſtrange queſtions. I ſhould be ſorry to ſee you nailed on a croſs for it.

Mabal. What is that?

The Giner. The puniſhment of the daring. Behold the croſs at the entrance of this ſquare! Every one that doubts or derides our divinity muſt expire on it.

Mabal

Mahal. Then the ſooner I am off, the better for me.

The Giner. A moment! Perhaps you are one of that race to whom we cannot refuſe our houſe?

Mahal. I am one of the deſcendants of Seth, whoſe name is Mahal. I came from the mountain, which I regret to have quitted.

The Giner (cordially embracing him.) A deſcendant from Seth! Happy chance! Know my friend, we gods are all deſcended from his daughters: you of courſe, are related to all of us. Follow me, and make my houſe your home.

Mahal. I thank you. I am but a man, and will therefore firſt ſee how my equals fare here.

Ben Hafi now rolled up his manuſcript, and adjourned his narrative.

The Caliph. It appears to me, that your Mahal will get as badly off here as every where elſe.

Ben Hafi. Why does your Highneſs fear this?

The

The Caliph. They are too ſmooth and polite to be frank and honeſt. I wiſh I may be miſtaken. So peace be with you!

TENTH

TENTH EVENING.

Ben Haſi. MAHAL having now entered thoſe parts of the city of Gin which were inhabited by men, ſoon found that theſe, excepting their different dreſs, were full as affable and polite as the ſelf-ſtyled gods, their ſuperiors. Our traveller, emboldened by theſe favourable appearances, immediately accoſted one of theſe plebians to beg him for a ſupply of what he then wanted. The ſmiling Giner making a thouſand apologies, referred him to another, the other to a third, the third to a fourth, and ſo on, till Mahal at laſt grew ſo tired of ſo many unſucceſsful applications, as to frown at the ſmooth-faced inhabitants. He made a laſt attempt to obtain the wiſhed-for relief by repeating his demand in a rather rough and uncouth way to a perſon whoſe appearance he thought more humane and prepoſſeſſing than that of the reſt. But the polite Giner, offended at ſo harſh an addreſs, haſtily replied: "What are you to me? What

I care if you want food and shelter? I have both; and that is enough."

Had Mahal been sufficiently enlightened to penetrate into the genuine sense of this answer he would soon have found the key to the politeness of the Giners, and discovered at the same time, that they worshipped a god of the same origin as that of the Iradians. He was however, sensible enough to imagine, that those words were no very good omen of what he had to expect.

An elderly Giner, who stood very near him, and had heard the harsh reply of his countryman, gently accosted Mahal, and asked him, who he was, and whence he came. The latter having told him that he came from the mountain, the Giner, who was somewhat advanced in years, smiled favourably on him, surveyed him from head to foot, examined minutely his stout make, and having curiously touched certain parts about his hip, asked him "How a man of his stoutness and appearance could be at a loss for any thing at Gin?"— He then requested that Mahal would immediately follow him.

The latter hardly knew what to make of his guide, of his touching and feeling his body

dy in ſo uncommon a manner, and of the words he had ſpoken. He took it at laſt for a peculiar cuſtom of the country, for a new mode of ſalutation,—and accompanied the Giner, who had in a very friendly manner taken him by the hand.

He conducted him into a bagnio, ordered him to be waſhed, rubbed, anointed, dreſſed, and entertained with a light and luſcious meal, after which he begged farther to accompany him. It was now evening; the Giner entered a ſpacious and neat dwelling, and made one of the ſervants announce his arrival to the owner. The doors were ſoon opened, and Mahal ſaw before him a young blooming widow, who received him and his conductor with bluſhing encomiums. His momentary confuſion only ſerved to render him the more agreeable to his fair hoſteſs, who by her ſignificant and amorous looks ſeemed to expreſs the pleaſure ſhe felt at his preſence. Meanwhile the Giner related to her what he knew of the man of the mountain, how he had met with him, and the manner in which he had thought proper to entertain him. The widow at length ſaid to Mahal's conductor: "I thank thee my dear, for having remembered me ſo well. If he anſwers what his appearance promiſes,

miſes, I ſwear by *myſelf*, that he ſhall not want for any thing my houſe will afford. It ſhall henceforth be my ſtudy to give him pleaſure, and his gratitude will, I hope, grant me as much in return."

She now withdrew to a corner of the apartment with the Giner, and Mahal perceived them as ſeriouſly diſcourſing with one another, as if they were about to ſtrike ſome important bargain. They at laſt came to an agreement, and the widow filled the Giner's hand with the god of the Iradians, whom Mahal from his heart deteſted. The former went away; and the widow fondly approached and careſſed the man of the mountain, ſaying: "My dear, I have purchaſed thee dearly of the man that is gone, but I hope not too dearly. Who can pay too great a price for a perſon that comes from the diſtant mountain, and is grown up there like a robuſt oak?"

Mahal very little comprehended the meaning of all this; but the cunning widow ſoon made the incomprehenſible comprehenſible, and a fine woman always has the ſecret power to make herſelf underſtood. His docility was great, as a ſimilar connection was conſidered as meritorious and uſeful before the

Flood

Flood. The patriarchs themſelves conſidered it as a virtue, though now-a-days, and under the like circumſtances, it is deemed quite the reverſe. Mahal's ſervice at the widow's was much more pleaſant than his former condition with the ſevere old taſk-maſter at Irad. The widow was perfectly ſatisfied with him, ſhe regaled his palate with the rareſt dainties; and he really led the life of the gods of Gin, which had a few moments before revolted his feelings. She even undertook to accompliſh him; and under her tuition he was taught many things which he would never have learnt by the intercourſe with his own ſex. To baniſh that irkſomeneſs which commonly attends two perſons who conſtantly live together, the widow invited parties to her houſe, and Mahal began to be more and more reconciled to the uſages of Gin and its inhabitants; nay, he owned in his heart, that the Giners did not merit the vengeance of the Lord. The Enochers, the Iradians, and the ſhip's crew, he denounced without reſerve to divine vengeance: "But why," ſaid he, "ſhould God with to deſtroy theſe fine, beneficient and well bred people, whoſe women are ſo kind and faſcinating? They live in concord and pleaſure, and for aught I perceive, do no harm."

In this complacent humour Mahal would ſometimes aſk the plaineſt and moſt ſimple queſtions, to the entertainment of the widow and her gueſts. But ſince ſimplicity is ſometimes too natural, refinement too ſoon cenſures it as childiſh and ſilly; and from this motive, and to keep up the *ton* of the company, the widow thought it proper to break her cohabitant of this otherwiſe amiable quality. To make a beginning of her intended inſtructions, ſhe invited to ſupper a ſelect company, from whoſe converſation Mahal ſoon collected, "That the empire of Gin was a land of friendſhip and love: that at Gin, every body from the Sultan to the meaneſt ſubject, lived to pleaſe himſelf: that the word *Self* was the tutelar god worſhipped by the whole country: that by this means the union of the ſtate at large was the ſtronger, ſince every prudent Giner's *Self* wanted the *Self* of his neighbour to ſupply certain indiſpenſable wants. This individual *Self* guided of courſe all the actions of the Gineis, who were on this account the moſt refined nation in the world, as they poſſeſſed the art to conceal thoſe motives of human actions in ſo fine and dexterous a manner, that in no country of the world the words ſacrifice, generoſity, diſintereſtedneſs, friend-

ſhip

ſhip and love, were more in vogue than at Gin, though in reality they were never diſplayed, unleſs ſome raw, uncultivated being would here or there gratify the animal inſtincts of his ſimple nature: that every Giner, to ſave appearances, took thoſe words for a ſtandard of truth, to give to ſocial life a fine glittering varniſh of politeneſs and mannerlineſs; and that he who let another perceive, that he conſidered thoſe words as empty ſhow, paſſed for an unſociable being, unworthy of human intercourſe:—but that all this had no influence upon the genuine actions of the Giners, every one of whom acted contrary to what he ſaid to another; and that it was rare for a Giner to aſk his fellow why he had not acted up to his word.

"THUS, for inſtance," added a ſpruce Giner, who ſeemed very eager to be the principal teacher of Mahal—"thus ſpeaks a Giner to another who ſolicits his aſſiſtance, but of whom his *Self* has nought to fear or to hope: 'I regret from the bottom of my heart, my dear friend, that I cannot be of any ſervice to you; which in plain Arabic is ſaying, What cares my *Self* for thy *Self*? My *Self* is very well, and thou canſt do it neither good nor harm.'

THUS,

"THUS, the Sultan ſaith: 'I have the happineſs to reign over the Giners for their ſake!' but his heart ſays, 'I reign over the Giner's for my ſake; they are my property!'

"THUS ſay likewiſe the elevated and choſen, who environ the Sultan's throne as ſubordinate divinities."

Mahal. Gods! gods! How can you that are in many other reſpects ſo reaſonable, be mad enough to take thoſe ſelf-named gods for any thing but what they really are, artful impoſtors?

THE whole company turned pale, ſhuddered, and looked as timidly about the hall as if the deſtructive gods were ſtanding with flaming ſwords behind them. The fair widow frowned for the firſt time at Mahal, and cried "Thou mad ſavage, tell me, wilt thou have me crucified with thee? If thou dareſt utter another word of the kind, dear as thou art to me, I will deliver thee up to the provoked gods; for my life and property are of more value to me than all the reſt."

THE gueſts now conſoled her, by repreſenting that no ſervant having been near, the converſation could not have been overheard. They

then

then all adviſed Mahal not to ſpeak any more of the gods, whoſe bounty and generoſity were equal to their might and juſtice; who permitted every man to live as he pleaſed, to grow as rich as he could, and who allowed every thing, provided they received their due. Nobody would queſtion their being of a ſuperior nature, and all their inferiors were born to work for, and to be governed by them.

MAHAL'S inſtructor at laſt ſaid to him: "It is beſt to ſay nothing at all of the gods, and neither to blame nor praiſe them. Our Grand Vizier ſays, 'I ſerve the Sultan and the ſtate.' That is to ſay, What care I for ſultan or ſtate? I ſerve myſelf!

The Caliph. This is no uncommon caſe, I believe after the Flood.

Ben Hafi. It may be ſo here and there.—Mahal replied to his inſtructor, "Pray inform me, is not the Grand Vizier one of thoſe I ought not to mention?" "To be ſure," quoth the former; "who durſt hold an office in Gin who is not one of the elect? The fathers of all thoſe ſtateſmen and courtiers left their deſcendants, their ſpirit and the power of governing Gin by inheritance; and thus

the

the whole empire is theirs, with all that lives or grows in it. They let out the ſoil, that we may cultivate it for them. But what of this? Though we are men, we live as merry as they, and our own *Self* is our god.

Mahal having a long while ſilently liſtened to his inſtructor, who continued more and more to diſplay his doctrine, now put this plain queſtion to his fair widow: "If all you Giners do every thing for your own ſake, why haſt thou received me in thy houſe, as I am nothing to thee? Why doſt thou keep and feed a ſtranger thus ſumptuouſly?" The widow replied, "Becauſe thou waſt welcome to me as a man of the mountain, and as a perſon ſtronger and more ſpirited than our fine and ſoft Giners. For thy ſtrength and ſpirit thou haſt met with theſe good things; continue always to deſerve them, and ſhall be very well ſatisfied."

"What," ſaid Mahal to himſelf, "am I then only a beaſt of burden of a different kind in this houſe, and all this is not done for my ſake? There I tilled the field of the ſevere old taſk maſter, and here"—At this moment the widow filled his plate with dainties.—"Why," interrupted ſhe, "doſt thou remain

at

at my house?" "It is," answered Mahal, "because thou hast hired, or perhaps purchased me as a beast of burthen."

The Widow (provoked). Have not I told thee savage, that I paid the procurer for having brought thee hither in preference, and that I neither hired nor bought thee? I have often told thee, that thou mayest quit my house at thy pleasure; but tell me why thou stayest notwithstanding?

Mahal. Because thy house pleased me till now.

The Widow. Why did it please thee?

Mahal. Because I found pleasure in it.

The Widow. And what did give thee that pleasure?

Mahal. Thy gentle manners, thy flatteries, thy good table, with rest, ease and convenience.

The Widow. Dost thou not confess in this manner, that thou remainest rather for thy own sake than for mine?

Mahal. I rather do: still it is thou that givest me all this pleasure.

The

The Widow. But suppose my beauty should change into deformity, and those dainties into coarse and bad fare, what wouldst thou then do?

Mabal. Why, I think I should leave thee.

The Widow. What makes thee then so provoking? Hast thou not confessed that thy *Self* is thy god, as my *Self* is mine? and that thou only abidest here for thy own sake? Were I now to expostulate with thee because thou dost not every thing for the love of me, wouldst thou not rail at me?

Mabal. I am not certain what I might do, and every thing appears indeed as thou sayest: nor can I make any other answer than, that it is perhaps not right for me to live with thee upon such a footing. I am humbled to think that mankind should be in such an impure connection. Perhaps this might also prompt me to quit thee.

The Widow (aside.) O the rude monster! All polishing is thrown away upon him; yet were he more refined, I might perhaps lose by it.

The Instructor. Didst thou ever see a pure connection?

Mabal.

Mahal. No where but upon the mountain.

The Inſtructor. It is of men I am ſpeaking, and not of animals. Thy vanity and ſelf-love are revolting againſt the truth of what we teach thee.

Mahal. I wiſh I were upon my mountain.

At this the Ginns began to laugh at theſe words; but they had loſt all farther reliſh for feaſting, and the whole company broke up ſoon after.

Before Mahal's arrival at Gin, the fair widow had been in a very human connexion with one of the gods of the country, in conſequence of which the former was turned out of her houſe. This god happening to bring upon himſelf the Sultan's diſgrace, was ordered to the frontiers of the empire, where a conſiderable charge was given him; but the united corps of the gods never ſuffering one of their ſpecies to languiſh long under the diſpleaſure of their chief, he was recalled unknown to the fair widow. He ſuddenly appeared before her, found her alone with the ſon of man Mahal, and in a ſtate which provoked his jealouſy. Reproaching the widow therefore, in a gentle manner with her unkindneſs, he com-

manded Mahal with a contemptuous frown to be gone. The rude mountaineer would not ſtir; words enſued, and Mahal plainly told the courtier: "Only try the godſhip with my manhood, and we'll ſoon ſee who ſhall be maſter of the field." The polite god would not deign to condeſcend ſo low, and went away in a pet. Now the fair widow wrung her hands in deſpair, pulled out her long and fair hair, and loaded Mahal with the bittereſt imprecations. The latter quite ſurpriſed at this ſudden change, could not forbear aſking what had occaſioned it. "Thou monſter, thou mountain beaſt," replied ſhe, "canſt thou aſk ſtill? How could thy duſt dare to offend one of the ſublime gods of the country, who has honoured me in preference to all the daughters of men, with forgetting his godſhip at my houſe, at leaſt for ſome hours?" Thou ſhouldſt have bent and humbled thyſelf at his appearance, and in thy immediate retreat I would ſoon have found means to appeaſe his reſentment. Am I to periſh for thy ſake? Fly, leſt thou art found here, and thus expoſe me likewiſe to be nailed to the croſs, which thou wilt not eſcape."

THE obſtinate Mahal would not move an inch; the embittered widow trembling with fear,

fear, called together her people, who turned out the ſtruggling mountaineer. For a while he kept ſtanding before the widow's dwelling foaming with rage; but before he had time to reflect diſpaſſionately upon what had paſſed, a body of armed men, headed by the incenſed god, ſeized and ſecured him in a priſon.—That night Mahal made a very bad panegyric upon the Ginees, and upon men in general. At day break he was brought before the tribunal conſiſting of gods, who had predetermined to condemn him as ſoon as he ſhould make his appearance. He was received in due polite form; his crime was repreſented in the blackeſt hue, though without any terms of harſhneſs or opprobium; and the chief or preſident of the gods expreſſed his heart felt ſorrow at the neceſſity he was under of pronouncing the ſentence of crucifixion upon him, having previouſly aſked him if there was aught he wiſhed to ſay in his defence?

MAHAL quite at a loſs what to ſay, thought it would be the beſt way for him to relate his hiſtory, and to mention at laſt his miſſion from the Lord, which probably would ſtrike his enemies with awe. He did not however, go quite ſo far; and at the very mention of his being a deſcendant of Seth, the counten-

ances

aces of all present began to brighten up, and the judge, president, or chief cadi, thus spoke: "Son of Seth, far be it from us to condemn one of our equals: you are one of us, because we are all the offspring of one of the sons and daughters of Seth. Certain as it is that no common man in Gin durst venture to offend one of the gods, it is not less evident that you must be one of the divine number! We are all highly satisfied with the happy issue of an affair otherwise so disagreeable to us."

Here the president and all the gods, not excepting the accuser himself, embraced Mahal, who began to be of opinion, that it would be better to owe his life to their folly than to risk it by exposing their madness.

The Cadi. Let this event be instantly proclaimed throughout Gin, that the people may see that none of them has been capable of offending us. Our welfare and existence depend on this opinion. As to this son of Seth, our brother here, we will introduce him to the Sultan, and inscribe his name in the list of the gods.

Mahal being taken into another apartment, and stripped of his coarse garments, they put on him a white robe trimmed with blood-

blood-red ſilk, and a red flaming croſs on the breaſt, placed him in their centre, and proceeded to the Sultan's palace. Mahal muttered to himſelf, "Theſe gods are leſs wicked than they are mad; what ſhall I do among them? Yeſterday a well-fed beaſt of burthen in the ſervice of a fair widow, who had me turned out of her houſe becauſe I offended one of theſe fools; to day I am one of them myſelf; but what will become of me, or what muſt I do to avoid this compulſion? Ought I now to be a fool with fools, or to tear this ignominious dreſs, and be nailed alive on yonder high croſs? Ah, Lord, what are men? What can ail them? What ſhall I do among them? Why did I mix with them? My experience increaſes daily; but thoſe things I experience being ſo uſeleſs and bad, my mind grows darker inſtead of being enlightened.—Alas! I only learn words, and the greater the quantity I learn, the more remote is their true ſenſe from my mind."

The gods now preſented Mahal to Sultan Lom, the ſupreme ruler of the Giners, and ranged themſelves proudly around his glittering throne. The grand and ſublime idea which our ſtranger had formed to himſelf of the mighty of the earth while he was ſtill on

the mountain, had by this time been ſenſibly diminiſhed by his experience; he was therefore glad to ſee a man before him, whoſe ſoft yet dignified affability and harmonious voice made a more agreeable impreſſion upon his heart than the whole throng of courtiers.—"What a pity," whiſpered he to himſelf, "that this man will not be called that which he ſo kindly and fairly repreſents!

THE gods having ſtated to his Highneſs, that the divine deſcendant of Seth was houſeleſs and breadleſs, Sultan Lom immediately aſſigned a diſtrict of land to Mahal, who having been made one of the gods of the country lived like the reſt of his colleagues from the ſweat of the people of Gin, whoſe humanity obliged them to till and cultivate the piece of land which the Sultan had ſpared him out of his own domains. Notwithſtanding all theſe bluſhing honours, he was not ſo preſumptuous as to believe himſelf to be any more than any other poor mortal. He often recollected the converſations that had paſſed at the widow's, and how his ſpirit was obliged to brook the ſuperior politeneſs and ſmoothneſs of the gueſts. He ſaw his fellow gods commit ſuch human acts as often tempted him to tear his white *caftan*, and call their godſhips a ſet of

pitiful

pitiful and impoſing ſcoundrels. Nothing but the lofty croſs which he daily ſaw before his eyes damped his riſing paſſion; and thoſe emblems of terror are indeed very apt ſometimes to cool the moſt patriotic enthuſiaſm.

SULTAN LOM requeſted Mahal one day to favour him with the narrative of his adventures, and however dull your Highneſs has found it in my mouth, yet it produced ſo powerful an effect upon Lom, that from that moment he made him reſide at his palace, and gave him a charge which in dignity bordered very near upon his own.

The Grand Vizier. I do not believe it.

The Caliph. But I do; and why ſhould I not? Yet I wiſh to know why this wiſe Sultan thought your Mahal worthy of ſuch diſtinguiſhed favour.

The Grand Vizier (to himſelf). It is a mere fiction and a lie, and one may eaſily ſee what it tends to, but we will ſoon take care of that.

Ben Haſt. I did not call Sultan Lom a wiſe man; ſtill it may be ſo. Mahal does not point out in what manner he operated ſo forcibly upon Lom, and his ſtory muſt doubtleſs have

produced

produced this effect. If your Highneſs pleaſes I will tell you my ſecret ſuppoſitions upon this poi[illegible].

The Caliph. Thou haſt me in thy power, and my pledged word is as ſecret to me as an oath taken upon the book of books.

Ben Haſi (bowing). Mahal, dread Lord, ſpoke with ſarcaſtic bitterneſs of the Sultans Pooh and Zobar, and plainly declared that their criminal madneſs proved to a demonſtration that mankind were ripe for the deſtruction with which the Almighty threatened them. Sultan Lom requeſted him to explain; and though he found the ſentence of proſcription upon the whole race of men ſomewhat ſevere, yet he conſidered it as juſter than Mahal; which made the latter marvel. Lom hearing at laſt that Mahal was to return to the old mountain to make his report to the incenſed governor of the Univerſe of what he had heard and ſeen, he thought it a ſtroke of good policy to ſhow himſelf to a man of ſuch an important calling, in a manner which was moſt likely to induce him to aſſign him a better part in his record, than that of the peeviſh Pooh, or of the wild and ſanguinary Zobar.

The Caliph. I ſhould not have received him better-

better for all that. The Prophet says; "*God will on the last day open every one's book, in which all our thoughts and deeds are recorded, besides all we have either publicly or privately said or done. Then every soul shall answer for itself, and every one shall be requited for the evil he has committed, and nobody's soul shall suffer wrongfully!*"

Ben Hasi. Sultan Lom, being unacquainted with the Koram, and deeming himself a god, wished nevertheless to be favourably mentioned in Mahal's record. Whether Mahal guessed his very human views, I cannot tell: but our mountaineer's report of this ruler is thus far very advantageous; and by the hieroglyphics at this identical part of his travels, Mahal thus literally expresses himself:

SULTAN LOM, had a finer understanding than all those that surrounded his throne, executed his commands, and governed the land in his name. He thought and said many excellent things, and expressed himself so humanely good and great, as to make me oftentimes stand before him lost in astonishment—He was, farther gentle and liberal; and the only thing I have to regret is, that I never saw him practise one of the grand, excellent,

and

and ſublime things which were conſtantly in his mouth."

The Caliph. Aye, aye; he was only a braggadocia: and great talkers do the leaſt you ſee.

Ben Haſi. Mahal thus continues:

"THE gods of the country had from Lom's earlieſt infancy taken care to render him ſo diffident of his own clear reaſon, as to make him ſubmit to all they wiſhed, however contrary to his own will.

The Caliph. By the Prophet! I am exactly under the ſame predicament; and whenever I hit on ſomething good or uſeful, they hum about me like a ſwarm of hornets to diſſuade me from it. One talks of danger to my perſon and to the ſtate, another of the violation of ancient and venerable uſages, a third of impracticability, and a fourth of the great miſchiefs which may reſult from ſuppreſſing a ſmall evil. Then all add, how prejudicial it would be for a monarch to revoke orders once given. They load me with praiſes, and with the choiceſt expreſſions conclude, ſighing:—What a pity it was, that ſo gracious a ſovereign did not reign over a nation ſufficiently worthy

worthy and ſuſceptible of enjoying the bleſſings of his intended mild government! To hear them one would be tempted to believe that a monarch was not made to do good, but only evil; and that men are ſo depraved that nothing but violence force and terror can keep them under.

THE Grand Vizier had liſtened with great attention to all Ben Hafi ſaid, and during the Caliph's reply he looked ſtedfaſt and demure on the ground. But immediately after his maſter had done, he had aſſurance enough to look firmly around.

Ben Haſi. In a private interview, your Highneſs was once pleaſed to aſk me how it came that the Viziers were ſo prompt to obey any fooliſh or bad commands of their monarchs, and why ſo ſlow and ſupine in executing what was good or uſeful. Your Highneſs has now anſwered this queſtion.

The Caliph. Ben Hafi, thou haſt agreeably ſurpriſed me; and for this I'll give thee an hundred golden *derhems*.

The Grand Vizier. I cannot ſay he has ſurpriſed me. Such things may perhaps have been before the flood, but in our days they are unheard of.

The

The Caliph. And why ſhould it be unheard of ſince the Flood? Matters are very much managed in this manner at my court; and if my Divan is not like that of the Sultan of Gin, it is ſurely not your fault.

The Grand Vizier. It is impoſſible; and if your Highneſs will give me leave, I will clearly prove it to you

The Caliph. I don't wiſh to hear your proofs; for you always twiſt your arguments ſo as to be in the right at laſt, were you ever ſo much in the wrong.

The Grand Vizier. I love to ſee your Highneſs in good humour, and am ſilent

The Caliph. You will do well to ſay no more. I remember a fable which my truſty eunuch *Maſud* often told me in my infancy, and its remembrance gives me pleaſure. "A young warrior," ſaid he, "ranged with his bow bent through the fields, to practiſe himſelf in ſhooting. There ſat a raven and a dove perching on a tree. The raven ſaid to the dove: 'I will ſhow this man ſo proud of his voice, that we birds have a voice too, and can ſpeak rationally and intelligibly.' At theſe words he hopped down on a leafleſs and withered

withered branch, and began to croak. The young warrior let fly his arrow, and down fell filly Ralph ſtone dead. The frightened dove, ſoaring through the air, exclaimed: "Wretched chatterer! How often is he the wiſeſt that is ſilent!"

The Grand Vizier. Mark this good leſſon, Ben Hafi.

Ben Hafi. When the ſage invents a fable, he makes both the great and the little his audience.

The Caliph. And the great ought to be the more attentive, ſince their follies may prove more hurtful to the multitude.

Ben Hafi. I thank your Highneſs for the hundred *dirhems*; and that I may not remain in arrears, pleaſe to liſten to me farther. But recollect, it is Mahal, not I, that ſpeaks:

"Thus miniſters, by making monarchs diffident of their underſtanding, annihilate their will, and with it the very faculty of willing; and the beſt ruler is found to act like a blockhead or an idiot, becauſe he is bereft of thoſe ineſtimable qualities. You will perhaps think, Lord of Believers, that

Mahal all at once ſpeaks as a man of experience and of the world, and that it probably is owing to the *caftan* he wears. You know that from a man's garment much is augured in favour of his underſtanding. Otherwiſe I cannot comprehend it myſelf, unleſs one of the gods ſhould have taken the trouble of teaching him. Be as it will he ſoon diſcovered that the good and wiſe Sultan Lom was ſo much ſwayed by the gods around his throne, who outwardly admired and worſhipped him, as to have no power left him but that of moving in the magic circle which they had drawn about his perſon, and of giving ſuch orders as they wiſhed, without caring whether they were good or bad, ſalutary or grevious to thoſe whom they concerned. Sultan Lom had too much penetration not to diſcern what they aimed at by the artful play wherewith they tricked both him and thoſe whom they contemptuouſly called beaſts and men: and ſo convinced too was he of the impoſture of his or their being gods; that he would fain have put an end to the farce, and ruled over all the Giners as man."

The Caliph. And why did not he do it?

Ben Haſi. Not becauſe he wanted underſtanding,

ſtanding, but becauſe he lacked will and firm reſolution. This will the man of the mountain wanted to rouſe in him, and he addreſſed him thus:

"Sultan Lom, you have imparted to me all your ſorrows, and I, the faithful adorer of the only true God, before whom we are all duſt, eagerly ſeize this opportunity to make you a true ruler of the Giners, to convert both them and you from this ſhameful idolatry. Only will firmly, and it ſhall be done. There are ſeveral ways to rid you of the yoke of thoſe ſelf ſtyled gods. Chooſe one of them. The moſt ſimple method would be for you to ſhow yourſelf in the excellence of your manly nature, as a man tired of their groſs deceptions; but whether this ſimpleſt method be alſo the ſafeſt and moſt prudent, I muſt leave to your own reflection. A more artful one would be, if you promoted as many of thoſe whom they call human beaſts to the rank of gods, that it would not be worth while having ſuch a title, and that every one of that privileged caſt who wiſhed for a decent ſubſiſtence, would be forced to take up ſome other occupation to procure it. Or ſummon all the inhabitants of Gin, who are thouſands in number to one of thoſe gods,

to

to assemble at an appointed day in your palace, and roundly tell them your resolution of delivering them from the tyranny of those overbearing usurpers. Be assured, that the Giners, who feel the hardship of feeding and keeping those lazy wretches, will joyfully assent to their deserved degradation. Then you will be able to execute all those fine and excellent things which you so often talk of."

The Caliph. I shall be glad to hear that this plan succeeded; but I much doubt it.

The Grand Vizier (muttering). It can't and shan't succeed.

Ben Hafi. Sultan Lom, highly pleased with Mahal's proposal, weighed it in his heart by the experience he had had of those gods, and felt himself much agitated and embarrassed at the idea of putting it into execution.

The Caliph. I am sorry for him, but I thought it would be so.

The Grand Vizier (to himself). And so did I.

Ben Hafi. He gradually polished the roughness of Mahal's scheme, and, divesting it of its severity and boldness, made it like every

every other medium. He wanted to proceed ſtep by ſtep, and this ſo wiſely, that he might either recede from or palliate his conduct. He now made the firſt important ſtep, and the gods took umbrage without letting him perceive it. At the ſecond ſtep they praiſed him; at the third they were mute; and before he could make the fourth, Mahal was ſtabbed with a dagger in the palace, not far from Lom's throne, and ſunk ſenſeleſs to the ground.

When Mahal recovered from his ſwoon, he ſaw himſelf in a ſtrange houſe, in the hands of the ſurgeons, who dreſſed his wound with great reverence. None of the by-ſtanders or attendants would ſpeak to him, or anſwer any of his queſtions. In this condition he remained for ſeveral months; and on his entire convaleſcence he roſe to go to the Sultan, when one of the gods intercepted him on his way, and brought him the following meſſage in the Sultan's name:

"The moſt illuſtrious Lom heartily regrets the unfortunate accident you have met with, and has given a ſevere reprimand to the god who wounded you ſo cloſely to his auguſt perſon. He adviſes you, for the ſake of your

future ſafety, to quit the country immediately in one of the ſhips that lie in the harbour ready to ſail. His ſupreme Highneſs is very glad that you did not die of the wound you received, and aſſures you, as a true deſcendant of Seth, of all his eſteem."

MAHAL was going to reply, when the deputed god interrupted him, ſaying: "My dear friend, you had better ſay nothing.—Both the Sultan and we would be ſorry to ſee ourſelves under the neceſſity of condemning one of our own claſs to the ignominious death of crucifixion."

HERE the Giner very genteelly put a bag of gold into Mahal's hands; but the latter ſcornfully threw it at the courtier's feet, rent the caftan he had on in an hundred pieces, and aſked for a human dreſs. The ſupple courtier, lamenting Mahal's doing ſo little honour to his ſuperior nature, granted him his demand, and gave orders to carry him immediately on ſhip-board.

THIS will convince you, Lord of Believers, how dangerous it is to point out the foibles of monarchs, and what reward one has to expect for it.

HERE

HERE Ben Hafi rolled up the manuſcript.

The Caliph. Had it been my caſe, I would have acted more gratefully and honourably. I always thought that poor Mahal would never thrive among thoſe fawning Giners. I dare ſay, he will henceforth be more circumſpect at courts.

ELEVENTH

ELEVENTH EVENING.

Ben Haſi. MAHAL, ſeeing himſelf in ſafety, thus ſilently murmured: "So, the ſhrewd Sultan Lom thinks a reprimand a puniſhment ſufficiently ſevere for an aſſaſſin that had like to have murdered me with a dagger! The preſumptuous throng has doubtleſs perceived, that I wanted to make Lom a man and a real chief over their threatened godſhips; and the diffident and fine-talking fool thought it beſt to let me fall a ſacrifice to his own ſafety, and thus to remain, what he has always been, a poor, pitiful fool of fools, bound in golden chains into the bargain!— What ſhall I ſay to all this? The Puny Pooh and my fair and infamous daughter Milka wanted to have me emaſculated, becauſe I upbraided them with their madneſs and profligacy. The ſavage Zobar drove me away as an idiot for refuſing to take part of the miſchievous god of the Iradians: and theſe ſelf-conceited gods of Gin attempted to diſpatch me with a dagger, and Lom lets the guilty

go

go unpunished, because I wanted to restore humanity and the true God to that degenerate country. Thus every new experience becomes a new sorrow, and every addition of knowledge an addition of pain. The scar of the wound on my bosom, and some new-learned words, which are likewise mere marks in my brain, is all I take with me from Gin. O Lord, what shall I have to say before thee in my own praise, or in that of mankind? O my mountain! O my sweet sleep! O my happy ignorance!"

Mahal, afraid of being again made the scoff and laughing stock of the petulant crew, had wisely retired below deck, where he soon collected so rich a store of meditation, that nothing in the course of the voyage could divert his attention, and he was quite insensible to the wind's rage and the billows' roar.—Like a travelling philosopher, that sets out in pursuit of the knowledge of man, and wisely begins abroad, he did not care where the ship might cast anchor, being convinced, that wherever winds and waves tossed her, he would be sure to find fools, provided the country was inhabited. Mahal might already have found this in his own person on the mountain. It was also very singular, that,

not

notwithstanding all he would at times say of experience, he did not feel any solicitude to return to Noah's abode. He found himself actuated by an ungovernable desire of viewing the vast scene, of learning more and more, and of observing every thing philosophically. He cherished hopes of discovering at last whether the malign influence in man originated from himself, or from him who had organized him to be such as he was, and who now threatened him with destruction. Thus he experienced what all the explorers of the human mind and life, and of the incomprehensible phenomena in the physical and moral world, daily experience. He felt his incompetency, complained of himself and of his God, and heaped confusion upon confusion. O blest simplicity! thou balm of life!

STILL lost in thought, Mahal continued in this solitary mood, till the ship approached the shores of the empire of *Farak*. The sun was shedding forth his golden rays, and brightening the face of all nature, when our traveller landed before the city of Farak, encompassed with ditches, towers and walls;—and waited till its strong iron gates were opened. At his entrance he gave the usual account of himself, and, being permitted to

penetrate

penetrate farther into the place, was aſtoniſhed at finding nothing but clear and tranſparent houſes, which ſeemed to form ever ſo many rows or ſtreets of huge lanterns. He could plainly ſee the citizens of Farak in bed with their wives and diſtinguiſh all that went forward in thoſe ſtrange dwellings.

The Caliph. Let me tell thee Ben Haſi, what I think of the matter. I believe thy Mahal has ultimately found here a good, pious and excellent ſet of people, whoſe actions were ſo blameleſs, that they felt no ſcruple to expoſe them in the light of day. Happy the country whoſe citizens have brought it ſo far in morality and piety, as to let a whole city witneſs the actions of every individual!

Ben Haſi. Every word ſpoke, or even whiſpered, could alſo be heard on the outſide of each houſe. Mahal was ſurpriſed at ſeeing a number of men at the doors of the reſpective houſes, applying their ears to a ſmall aperture, liſtening very attentively, and writing down certain ſigns upon tables. Theſe liſteners wore fine parti coloured cloaks reaching down to their heels, and hoods on their heads.

MAHAL, to imitate them, put his ear to an aperture of a houſe, and heard a ſoft whiſpering.

pering. Unaccuſtomed to the buſineſs, he did not immediately comprehend what the whiſpering meant, and was juſt going to liſten again with redoubled attention, when one of the other liſteners, pulling him by his left ear, aſked him for the ſign which qualified him for this new office. Mahal having no ſuch ſign to produce, the man bade him follow him. He led him through a very broad and long ſtreet, all the houſes of which were ſtrongly walled, and quite the reverſe of the lanterns. They ſtopped before a large edifice, and Mahal's guide ſaid: "Here lives our chief, the firſt Gomer in Farak."

THIS word, as Mahal explains it, has three different ſignifications, which it gradually obtained, in good or bad times. You well know, that the words which men uſe, like them, grow better or worſe. The firſt ſignification was the primitive, denoting the thing or object. The ſecond was figurative, or perverted. The third, the wholly dignified or ſublime. In the hiſtory of words you will at the ſame time find the hiſtory of thoſe men or things which they denoted. Agreeably to the firſt primitive meaning, the word Gomer ſignified a man who lives on the ſigns of words. The figurative or perverted ſenſe denotes

denotes a man that uſureth the truth and ſells it, or a liar with a glib tongue. The third and dignified conſtruction of the word implies a *bookmaker* or an *author*; and of this word I ſhall make uſe, according to Mahal's record, when ſpeaking of the Gomers of Farak.

THEY found the chief of the Gomers or authors in a ſpacious hall, whoſe walls were lined with boards, on which a great number of manuſcripts was ranged. It is a pity that the Flood has ſwept them away, ſince books are ſo very *ſcarce* in our times!

MAHAL's guide, who ſeemed to be a ſubordinate writer, whiſpered ſomething into the ear of the ſerious and grave chief of his tribe, who, turning to Mahal, aſked him: "How couldſt thou, unhappy wretch interfere in the office of the ſages of Farak, and liſten at the door of one of our citizens' houſes?"

Mahal. I neither know the ſages nor the fools of this country. I arrived this morning before your city: they permitted me to enter it: I ſaw a man lean with his ear againſt the hole of a door, and followed his example, in hopes to learn ſomething worth knowing.

Our mountaineer now began to relate the first part of his story, when the chief Gomer, interrupting him, said: "Never apply your ear again to the doors of the Farakers. Go through the streets without looking into the houses; for this is only allowed to those whom you see dress like me and this sage here and who can give the secret signal. We pardon for this once thy ignorance; and since thou art come from such a remote country, I will present thee to the mighty and great Sultan of the Farakers. Bow thrice down to the ground before him, and relate all that happened to thee at Farak. Perhaps he will smile, and then thy fortune is made. But above all things forget not to bow thrice to the ground, and put one finger on thy lips, till he bid thee speak.

Mahal. Pray be so kind as to inform me, if the mighty Sultan of the Farakers takes himself also for a god, because I am rather afraid of those human deities.

The Chief of the Gomers (smiling). I apprehend thou comest from Gin, the country of fools and impostors?

Mahal. I do; and thou hast given them the name which they justly deserve.

The

The Chief. Thou art now in the country of the ſages, who by their wit and the ſpirit of their works have eradicated all folly. If you appreciate the mighty Sultan of the Farakers by his power, he may be conſidered as a god, ſince he can deal good or evil wherever our ſages find it convenient to be dealt. In other reſpects he is a man like me and thee, and has too much ſenſe to think himſelf more.

Mahal. Since this is the caſe, introduce me to him, for I can aſſure thee he is the firſt perſon I have found upon a throne who did not take himſelf for a being of a ſuperior nature. This prepoſſeſſes me much in his favour.

The Chief. You cannot think too highly of his grandeur, and he will excel every idea you may form of him; for he is the firſt Sultan entirely formed and accomplished by the Gomers!

Here the Chief deſired Mahal to withdraw, when his guide brought him into another room, where he was profuſely and ſumptuouſly entertained. This little circumſtance ſerved farther to inſinuate the Gomers, the Sultan and the Farakers into his favour.

THE Chief of the Gomers repaired to the palace, attended by a numerous retinue of parti coloured cloaks; and Mahal, agreeably to the secret instructions given him, stared straight forwards, looking neither on one side nor the other, except a few squinting glances he cast on the parti-coloured cloaks, who were right and left prying into the transparent dwellings. They soon entered the vast palace, whose height and breadth were almost out of the eye's reach. The guards and servants made a profound obeisance to the Chief of the Gomers, who led his suite into a beautiful, most extensive, high and wide hall, which, like the palace, seemed to have been built for such beings as Mahal on the mountain once fancied he should find in the mighty men of the earth. At the farther end of this vast hall sat Komar, the Sultan of Farak, at the very sight of whom our ingenuous mountaineer uttered a loud exclamation of surprise and astonishment.

The Caliph. Ah! the silly chap will never leave off his old tricks.

Ben Hafs. Sultan Komar was neither an object of surprise nor astonishment. At best, he would have excited an almost imperceptible

ble ſmile in the countenance of a well bred man; for this mighty and grand perſonage of a Sultan was only a little dwarf, not much above three feet high, ſplendidly dreſſed out, wearing a large and ſumptuous crown on his head, and repoſing his right foot on a big globe, on which appeared the figure of the earth, wrought in gold. Though his face was full of wrinkles, yet he looked very majeſtic; and, little as he was, ſurveyed the whole throng with a ſtern aſpect, and between whiles ſtroked his long and thin beard. In his right, he held a long ſtaff, and Mahal's exclamation ſomewhat diſconcerted the ſolemnity of the preſentation. The Sultan ſtared at the rude mountaineer with an indignant eye, when the Chief of the Gomers, walking up to him, kiſſed his Highneſs's beard, and reſpectfully whiſpered ſomething which made the dwarf look rather pleaſant. The Chief then took ſeveral rolls from his ſubordinate Gomers, and read to the Sultan in a low tone of voice what the liſteners had heard and ſeen, which ſeemed very much to gratify the dwarfiſh ruler. Mahal was then ordered to come forth; and having made three low reverences and laid his fingers on his lips, the Sultan beckoned him with his long ſtaff to ſpeak,

relating first the misdemeanour he had been guilty of against the customs of the country, and afterwards his own story. The monarch's wrinkles began to be dispelled by frequent smiles; and when the Chief mentioned Mahal's question, Whether the Sultan thought himself a god? his Highness burst out into such loud laughs as to make the large globe, which supported his right foot, shake to and fro, the large gold crown totter on his little head, and his sides swell and fall again like a pair of bellows. The rest of the assembly testified their joy only by a few sober and decorous smiles.

Sultan Komar now gave orders to provide the stranger with a dwelling and proper subsistence. A set of authors took Mahal in the midst of them, led him through the different streets, and exclaimed, "Farakers! He has seen him—he has seen him—he has seen the great, the magnificent, the mighty!—He has seen the sublime sage we have formed! He has seen the first corner-stone of society, Without whom all is ruin! He has seen the powerful Sultan Komar, who has favoured him with a smile!"

The Farakers, young and old, cried with a tone

a tone of joy tinctured with melancholy, "Ah, happy man! he has ſeen the mighty corner-ſtone! Unhappy us! we have not ſeen him—When ſhall we ſee him? when ſhall he ſmile on us?"

An author called out, "Wiſe and happy he that ſees him not, and ſtill believes."

Mahal was conducted into a very clear and tranſparent dwelling, ſupplied with proviſions, and adviſed to be cautious. It was quite natural for him to aſk what he ſhould be cautious for; and from his various obſervations I have only been able to draw the following reſult.

The Farakers were formerly a very refractory and rebellious people, fond of innovation. They contended with equal ardour and impetuoſity when they were wrong as when they were right. They were never ſatisfied, and, provided they could quarrel and fight, cared not whether the conſequences were beneficial or hurtful to them. They were on this account ſeldom contented with their ſultans, and theſe more rarely with them. The Gomers alone were authoriſed to write the hiſtory of Farak. The Farakers, it ſeems, felt too much that gratifying ſentiment called freedom,

freedom, while their rulers were not less apt to experience the titillation of despotism.—These are now two such opposite sensations, that the gratification of the one must always give pain to the other, and remain two extremes still irreconcilable among nations after the Flood. Farak was therefore the theatre of continual warfare, and the least advantage obtained by either of the contending parties terminated in abuse of victory. The Gomers, or sages and writers of the country, might easily have put an and to the contest, by drawing a proper line between the parties, and carefully separating and watching the respective rights of the champions, and keeping them within limits. Yet it appears that the Gomers of Farak trusted but little to human nature; and this mistrust was perhaps the fruit of the knowledge or experience they had in their own selves. During the combat they remained very quiet, as they boasted of humanity; they employed themselves in studying truth; and while occupied with remote speculations of philosophy, they always took care not to lose sight of their nearer and more immediate interest. They discovered, that what would benefit them the most, would be solely to adhere to him who united all the power in his individual self; and that should

this

this individual by their advice and assistance triumph over the multitude, it would be much easier for them to guide him at their pleasure than a stubborn and fickle populace. All quarrels and feuds must thus have ceased. They communicated these very patriotic thoughts to one another, joined together to execute the intended plan, and thus quietly laboured to found the lasting peace of the empire of Farak. They gradually won the boldest and most ignorant of the people to their interest, began with suppressing insignificant rights, such as the safety of person and property, &c and terminated with destroying those rights without which a people cannot but become what the Farakers became. It must however be recorded, to the praise of the sages of Farak, that, if they destroyed the spirit of liberty in the bosoms of their countrymen, they wisely and exclusively reserved it for themselves. And that this prerogative might never be endangered in their hands, they wove about the Sultan so fine a net, that he must have been less than a dwarf to disentangle himself from it. They took care to make the weakest and most infirm heir succeed to the throne. They acted as guardians to the sultan dwarf, and during this interval projected and introduced the plan of the happy

government, which I am going to deſcribe here from Mahal's manuſcript, as a pattern to poſterity.

The firſt author or writer always held the office of Grand Vizier for life. His election alone occaſioned ſcenes of ſtrife and contention among the learned tribe; and they would have ended by deſtroying each other, had they not fortunately hit upon the ſcheme of electing the eldeſt among them to that important truſt. But to prevent all future miſunderſtandings, and to ſave the empire from danger, it was enacted with unanimous approbation, that he alone ſhould bear that exalted dignity, who had written the largeſt and moſt voluminous books. I need not tell you what incitement this was for the lettered tribe! On the demiſe of a Grand Vizier, every Gomer, bending and coughing under the load of his manuſcripts, went to the hall of election, in which a balance was fixed.—The manuſcripts and books were then weighed againſt each other as nicely as gold or jewels, and the moſt ponderous always ſtruck the balance in favour of its poſſeſſor. All other ſtations, from the Grand Vizier to the meaneſt officer of the Sultan's court, were likewiſe filled by writers, and their promotion

on conſtantly depended on the weight of their works. The parti-coloured cloak diſtinguiſhed them from the reſt of the Farakers. Some of thoſe who held offices under the crown had alſo the rare privilege of putting their ear cloſe to the mouth of the citizens, to look into their lanterns, and ſet down all the words, actions and ſuppoſed thoughts of the Farakers. To accompliſh this without difficulty, an architect was charged to deſign the plan of a houſe, in which nothing could be ſpoken or done unheard or unſeen from without. Thus originated the neat tranſparent houſes which Mahal ſo much admired when entering the city. Through all the rooms pipes were drawn which communicated with the ſmall aperture or liſtening-hole at each door; and ſo ſkilfully was this contrivance executed, that the leaſt whiſper reſounded quite intelligibly to the liſtening officer.— The latter ſet down all he ſaw or heard, and the report was daily brought to the Grand Vizier, who amuſed the Sultan with the moſt intereſting parts of it at his levee. To interrupt a Gomer in the execution of his duty, or to diſturb him, was forbidden under pain of death; and every Faraker who left off ſpeaking when he perceived the liſtener, was

marked

marked as a bad or ſuſpicious citizen. For all this trouble of governing the ſtate and liſtening at the Farakers, the Gomers, like the gods of Gin, lived at the expence of thoſe for whoſe happineſs and tranquillity they were ſo aſſiduouſly occupied. Through their care the dwarfiſh Sultan lived in gigantic and unlimited power in his vaſt palace, always ſlept quietly, gratified his pleaſures, had nothing to fear, and might fancy himſelf ſole governor on his golden throne, before whom all trembled, and nobody durſt ſay aught to diſpleaſe him. The net of the Gomers was indeed ſo finely woven, that had their Sultan been a giant in body and underſtanding, he could not have perceived that he was the firſt ſlave in Farak. And in this ſenſe, ſays Mahal, every monarch is a dwarf, if, from good-nature, weakneſs, neglect, incapacity, or want of energy, he ſuffers his Viziers or favourites to govern the people.

In other reſpects, the Farakers were at liberty to work with their heads and hands as much as they pleaſed, except to write books. And what indeed could they want more?—"They were even allowed," ſays Mahal, "to amuſe themſelves as they pleaſed, provided all was done ſo as to be ſeen or heard, and

and without giving farther umbrage to the well-regulated government of the ſtate."

THE Gomers found this ſo excellent a conſtitution, that they were never tired of praiſing it both day and night, and overwhelming the Farakers with writings in proſe and verſe, and talking of the bleſſings they enjoyed under ſuch a peaceful and happy government.—Whoever wiſhed to enjoy the neceſſary reputation of a loyal and well-diſpoſed ſubject, was obliged to read, admire, and cry up thoſe productions in his leiſure hours; and he that did not, paſſed for a ſly, ſuſpicious and ſeditious democrat. This employment was productive of a twofold benefit to the Gomers. In the firſt place, they laudably and honourably exerted themſelves in favour of their happy conſtitution; in the ſecond, they wrote themſelves into ſnug and lucrative places, and each thick book they manufactured, could help them a ſtep higher when their merit came to be weighed. Their books were alſo full of large ſtrokes, flouriſhes, and daſhes, to embelliſh and expand the productions of their wit. What a pity it is, that the Flood has ſwept them away!

BEHOLD, Lord of Believers, the means by

 which

which a party of men, who never had drawn a ſword or mounted a horſe, and trembled at the word *combat*, put an end to the bloody broils of Farak, and rendered this people the happieſt, quieteſt and moſt bleſſed of all thoſe that flouriſhed on earth in thoſe antediluvian ages! There was no bold ſpeech, no dangerous or deep thought, no offenſive and libellous book to exaſperate and provoke the members of the government. The dwarfiſh Komar could ſit quietly on his throne, the Gomers could write themſelves undiſturbed, and by hereditary ſucceſſion, into places and dignities, and had no danger, no change, no revolution to dread: every man could live happy, if he choſe to be what the Gomers would make him. To be brief, the Farakers lived as quietly as the dead in the grave, and nothing diſtinguiſhed them from the duſt of their departed anceſtors, but their being obliged to do that which the dead cannot do; that is, to toil and labour for the Gomers, till they became corpſes in appearance.

THIS form of government might for its quietneſs be recommended every where, ſince quietneſs is all the ſage requires. And what indeed has he to do with a ſet of *factious* raggamuffins that are conſtantly kicking up riots and

and rebellions for their imaginary rights? It might also be very usefully recommended in those countries whose inhabitants are infected with the spirit of liberty; but the monarch and those of his favourites who may wish to introduce it, ought above all things to take care to get the writers over to their side, and, to effect it the quicker, give them pensions and places according to the weight of the books they shall write in favour of the *good cause*: show them the fine prospects of ruling over the lives, liberties and properties of their fellow-subjects, and the hungry tribe will presently fall to work. Our eastern regions, dread Lord, want no such remedy; we have the divine laws of the sublime Prophet, which determine every thing that now is or shall hereafter be; and the successors of the great Mahomet ought rather to submit to the silken halter, than violate or change a letter of the book of books.

In Europe, where men are still raw and uncultivated, such a constitution would thrive amazingly, and we hope the Europeans will introduce it, as soon as their Gomers shall write more books than they can think, or their readers peruse. But what care we believers for infidels?

The Caliph. What said Mahal to all this?

Ben Hafi. He thought perhaps as you do, but was afraid to think for as to be ſuſpected in his lantern. One day however he had the imprudence to aſk a Gomer: Why his tribe lived in walled dwellings, and the people in lanterns? "Becauſe," anſwered the ſcribbling placeman, "we are not dangerous to the ſtate." "I believe you," retorted Mahal, and by an arch ſmile incurred ſuſpicion.

To his misfortune, Mahal could not help *thinking aloud*; and ſeriouſly as he had purpoſed to be cautious at Farak, irkſomeneſs betrayed him one day to make the following monologue: "That Sultan Komar is exactly a diminutive copy of Poob; and his ſubjects, who inhabit lanterns and dare not ſpeak, are truly worthy of ſuch a ſultan. Thoſe Gomers who do nothing but liſten at the people, and write heavy books, are worſe than the gods of Gin. They did not apply their ears to the Giner's mouth, and the huſband could at leaſt beget a ſlave for them without its being ſeen how he did it. O Lord! What are men! What is become of thy creatures? How could they become that which I ſee and experience?"

No ſooner had Mahal uttered theſe laſt words,

words, than a Gomer entered, and read to him what he had ſpoken. Then addreſſing him with great gravity, the Gomer ſaid:—"Stranger at Farak, I am thy genius, who has undertaken to provide for thy ſafety and happineſs, as long as thou ſhalt remain under our protection. Were I to report thy mad ſpeech to the Sultan, thou wouldſt expiate it with thy dear life. But I have orders to overlook thy firſt fault, and wonder at the grace thou haſt found before his auſtere countenance. Obeying the ſovereign's orders, I only inflict on thee the light puniſhment, not as puniſhment—for it does not deſerve that name—but to enlighten thee: that thou ſhalt read all the books by which our exalted Grand Vizier wrote himſelf into office, and which in proſe and verſe tend to make the Farakers worthy of the bleſſings they enjoy under the happieſt conſtitution. I hope it will convince thee that Farak is the only country that flouriſhes under a mild, happy and well regulated government."

By order of the Gomer, a number of camels laden with the Grand Vizier's books arrived before Mahal's lantern, who was obliged to unload and range them in proper order under the ſages directions. The latter then

conſigned our mountaineer to the care of a ſevere overſeer, who made him immediately enter upon his taſk.

TWENTY moons and ſome weeks elapſed before Mahal got through this maſs of volumes. Often did he ſigh in his heart, which was all he could do without putting himſelf in danger: "O Lord," whiſpered his conſcience, "why didſt thou thus ſhockingly punish my deſire of knowledge! Thy puniſhment exceeds my ſtrength. Take away my life, and let me not die by inches over theſe dreadful and tedious books!"

IN this interval he heard and ſaw nothing particular from his lantern, which ſtood in the centre of a ſquare, except the following ſingular ſcene. An old Gomer, in a beautiful parti-coloured cloak, appeared publicly on the ſquare, and his ſervants were holding three camels laden with his works. Having ſummoned the attention of the Farakers by the ſound of trumpets, and gathered crowds of them reverently around him, he thus exclaimed:

"Hear me people of Farak. I'll tell you a great thing. Fool's prate, but wiſe men are ſilent. I know you: I know one ought to hate

bawl one's merit into your ears, for your ſpirits and your hearts are dull.

"It is now forty-four years ſince I, the author of all theſe manuſcripts, entered my literary career in the ranks of poets and orators.

"This career embraces almoſt half a century. I commenced it ere the dawn of our wiſdom diſappeared before the riſing ſun of higher knowledge, and I conclude it as it appears, with its decline.

"Offer then prayers and ſacrifices, that I may live many years longer among you. For great as the honour would be for me if all wit and wiſdom ſunk with me into the grave, ſtill I pity you too much, poor Farakers!"

The Farakers ſeemed vexed and grieved at the bottom of their hearts, at being threatened with ages ſterile of wit and genius. And many among them vented their ſorrow with ſobs and tears.

One of them who was more accompliſhed than the reſt, now exclaimed: "This ſage has written many excellent things upon politics, both in proſe and verſe, but theſe are the moſt ſublime words he has ſpoken. Let us

us admire and tranſmit them to our children's children. Ours is ſtill the comfort to warm ourſelves with his writings, if that cold and ſterile winter come, which he has ſo wiſely foretold!"

MAHAL ſaid: "The Farakers are a good people indeed!" His overſeer returned:—"Why ſhould they not? Have we not formed them?"

MAHAL having at laſt performed his ſtupendous taſk, had become ſo diſtracted, that the firſt time he went out, he committed an act of ſuperlative folly, or, in the language of Farak's writers, the greateſt of crimes. He took an airing out of town along the ſea ſhore to thank God that he had ſuffered his puniſhment without loſing his health or life by it.—On a ſudden a large body of Farakers, led by a Gomer in a parti-coloured cloak, advanced to the ſea-ſide, eſcorting three of their countrymen whoſe hands were tied to their backs. Having approached the water, they opened three ſacks, laid ſeveral heavy ſtones in each of them, and putting in the three pinioned ſufferers, were going to throw them into the deep. Mahal, who had till now been a quiet ſpectator, ruſhed among the multitude, and

aſked

asked the cause of so barbarous a deed. The Gomer condescended to say:

"The first man here has committed the atrocious crime of calling our great Sultan Komar a dwarf!

"The second has been guilty of the more horrid crime of censuring our excellent constitution, the wonder of all ages!

"The third has perpetrated the most horrid of all crimes, by styling a book written by our dignified chief, the Grand Vizier, a wretched and pitiful performance!"

The man of the mountain replied: "Ye mad and wicked hypocrites! is not your constitution a monster? Is not your Sultan a dwarf? Are not the books of your Grand Vizier, (the reading of which almost killed me) a jumble of the flattest absurdities?"

The wise Gomer cried: "Farakers be deaf!" and the Farakers replied: "We were deaf! We are deaf!"

The Gomer gave a signal, and the people gagged Mahal's mouth, and handcuffed him.

The three delinquents, previous to their execution, were now obliged to cry out of their sacks:

"The

"THE Sultan is no dwarf! The conſtitution of Farak is the beſt in the world! The works of the Grand Vizier are the ſublimeſt monuments of human genius!"

THEY were then committed to their watery grave, and the Farakers returned with their priſoner to the city. Mahal being a ſtranger, and the ſultan having ſo heartily laughed at him, his puniſhment of death was moſt graciouſly commuted into baniſhment and whipping.

The Caliph. Oh, don't let the poor fellow be whipped! He ſuffers for the truth, and I forget all his other bold arguments.

Ben Haſi. It could not be helped, dread Lord, and Mahal aſſures us, that he did not ſuffer half ſo much from the laſhes of the whip as he did in peruſing the Grand Vizier's books.

The Caliph. Moſt likely he did not, but he muſt know beſt.

Ben Haſi. Mahal now curſed the Farakers, the Giners, the Iradians, the Enochers, and all book-makers, and was tranſported beyond the frontier.

BEN-

Ben Hapi here made a reſpectful bow, and withdrew.

TWELFTH

TWELFTH EVENING.

BEN HAFI made his appearance punctually to a minute, and was just going to begin, when the Caliph thus interrupted him:

The Caliph. Thy tales, Ben Hafi, have lately been so very shocking, that nothing but my pledged word can prevail on me to suffer thee to go on.

Ben Hafi. Their being true is the only thing to be lamented; and their being instructive to nations and princes is what compensates the disagreeable impression they will make upon the mind of some.

The Caliph. I hope this evening's tale will be merrier than the rest.

Ben Hafi. I will not answer for it, though I am confident that one part of it will please your Highness very much.

The Caliph. Then begin it.

Ben Haſi. Thus far ſucceſſor of the prophet, Mahal had only ſeen men that were ripe, but he was now to behold ſuch as were over-ripe; that is to ſay, men who riot ſo long with their own underſtanding and imagination, till they beget monſters—Salamanders of the ſpiritual or intellectual world, who have killed ſimplicity on earth, baniſhed from it natural happineſs, and invented a game which diſſolves in man thoſe energies that he requires to bear and combat neceſſary evils.

MAHAL was now in the great empire of Copha, the moſt enlightened after Farak, and truly calculated either to completely finiſh a philoſopher, or to confound him entirely.

WHILE Mahal was walking up and down the ſquare of the capital, he perceived a man whoſe face was flushing with the roſes of health and good living, advance towards him. Notwithſtanding this outward change, he thought he knew the mien and deportment of the perſon, and was not miſtaken in his conjecture. It was Ram, his old teacher at Enoch who had ſo abruptly left him in the foreſt near Irad. Ram, recognizing him at firſt ſight bade him a friendly welcome at Copha.

Mahal. If I am not so disagreeable to thee as I was when thou so scornfully leftest me, take me under thy protection. So many are the ills I have experienced, as to be almost afraid of setting my foot on strange ground.

Ram. I hope then human life is become clearer to thee than at Enoch, and that thou hast traced out its sources, which thou so eagerly soughtest there?

Mahal. Not at all.

Ram. Then I praise thy happy lot. Thou art now in a country where all is known, as it is known that nothing can be known. But I suppose thy propensity to wonder and astonishment has somewhat abated.

Mahal. So so; but I have rather lost than won by it. Pray, where am I now?

Ram. In the land of reason! In the empire of wisdom! In a country whose Sultan is a philosopher, to whom I came because he knows how to esteem people of my stamp.

Mahal. Then he certainly does not take himself for a god, like all the fools I have seen.

Ram.

Ram. By no means; he is a philoſopher, a thinker, who ſuffers none but thinkers about him, and wants to make all his ſubjects thinkers*. He has reſolved to diſcard God, becauſe he makes himſelf incomprehenſible thro' his own fault, and to put himſelf in his place. The people are already prepared for this event, and you will ſee the wonders which Reaſon works in this country.

Mahal. Then let me immediately quit it.

The Caliph. Pleaſe God he may! I expect no good of this land and its Sultan, and am ſorry that Mahal has met Ram here.

Ram. What! ſhould the man who left the mountain for the ſake of knowledge, fly at its very ſource?

Mahal. Firſt of all, tell me, what is a thinker or philoſopher?

Ram. Such a thing as I am: a man that now knows nothing, now every thing, and rails at all. But this is a mere joke: I am a philoſopher

* *The Arabic manuſcript uſes the word thinker, which in the European languages, implies a philoſopher.*

philoſopher of the Sultan Thinker; I am very well off, and if aught is to be made of thee, thou ſhalt ſoon be the partner of my proſperity. But thou muſt declare war againſt all the opinions thou haſt hitherto imbibed, and follow only the laws of pure Reaſon, elſe thou art uſeleſs here. Come to my dwelling, that I may ſound the ſtate of thy perplexed brain.

MAHAL followed Ram to a houſe, which was more like a little temple of ſenſuality than an abode of wiſdom. "Thou mayeſt ſee now," ſaid Ram, "That Sultan Thinker knows how to value his friends. I brought nothing here but my naked body; but the ſpirit which the Sultan diſcovered in me, has made him thus ſupply my wants."

MAHAL was refreſhed with the greateſt dainties the ſeaſon could afford, but the thought that the Sultan would aboliſh God, embittered all the contentment which he would otherwiſe have felt, and rouſed his miſtruſt. Ram, after railing at him a good while, requeſted to hear his ſtory,—with which deſire Mahal faithfully complied. Ram liſtening very attentively to the narrator, ſmiled at every diſaſter which had befallen his gueſt. The adventures at Irad, Pooh's fall, the

the perusal of the works of the Grand Vizier of Farak, and the whipping made him quite merry. At the conclusion he said to Mahal; "I see thou art still the old man, but the Sultan of this country loves oddity and novelty. I will introduce thee to him, thou wilt recount thy story, and he will probably make thy fortune for life."

Mahal. Thou knowest that I am commanded by the Lord to return to the mountain as soon as I shall have discovered the sources of human folly and wickedness. I believe that you are more foolish here than any where else.

Pam. May be so, and this makes us the worthier of being seen. But I will first make thee acquainted with our Sultans character and history, lest some trick of thine expose thee to new dangers.

The father of Sultan Thinker was a great and powerful man. He loved heroic fame, and with the lives of many thousands of his Copts purchased the men of Mullah and Sullah as his subjects. As the Sullahers and Mullahers cost but little gold and a great deal of blood, he thought it an excellent bargain. Being

sole-

sole ruler of the three empires, he began to make his reign tolerable, and as a good father took care to leave his children to be the people's inheritance. He took a wife, got three sons, each of whom he named from the particular qualities of mind he discovered in him. He resolved to distribute the three empires among these three sons, so as to make the character of the ruler truly consonant, as he thought, with the temper of the ruled.

His first son Fakim (Thinker) obtained this distinguished name, by tearing or beating to pieces every thing that was put into his hands to amuse him; by pausing and reflecting so long upon the fragments and ruins, and putting them together in such various and strange forms, till he believed to have discovered the mechanism of their formation, or formed something else of them, however odd and distorted. But never would he attempt to restore a thing to its former state; a proof this of his profound, indefatigable and penetrative spirit. For this reason the discerning parent destined him from his earliest infancy to be the future monarch of the pensive, freakish and fretful Copts. The bare name often does wonders; and the little man hearing himself always called Thinker and Sovereign, already

ready thought himſelf both, and created a pretty monſter of the two notions. The teachers appointed to inſtruct him, very naturally uſed their beſt endeavours to give form and poliſh to that monſter, and to impreſs their pupil with ſuch a powerful idea of his penetrating ſpirit, that he is actually become the proudeſt thinker in his empire, and finds ſuch delight in thinking as to wiſh for no leſs than to make ſuch vaſt thinkers of his ſubjects as he deems himſelf to be. He will not be happy till he ſhall reign a thinker over thinkers. As to his court, he has already brought it ſo far, that the ſorrieſt Copts are quite adepts in their Sultans favourite paſſion. They grow wittier on one ſide, and more ſtupid on the other. The only fault which ſome fooliſh people pretend to have thus far diſcovered in the Copts, is, that ſince their Sultan has made them great thinkers, they are become worſe workmen and worſe men. But all this will be done away, if they ſhall once be able to read plainly the moral laws which are written with ſuch nice and fine characters in reaſon. Theſe moral laws are the invention of Sultan Thinker; and thou wilt be aſtoniſhed how eaſy it is to lead men to this long ſought, long wiſhed-for, and uſeful perfection.

Mahal.

Mahal. But could not you tell me what thoſe memorable laws were?

Ram. I will. They were ſome magic formules, or tenets, which will all at once cure mankind of all moral evil, of all diſquietude of mind, of injuſtice, of covetouſneſs and ſcepticiſm, which will reduce every thing to a ſimple principle and make men as pure and perfect beings as their biped ſpecies, that ſubſiſts on earthy food and drink, can poſſibly be.

THE firſt formule is this: None of our notions and conceptions exceeds the experience of our five ſenſes. That is to ſay: All thou canſt not ſmell, taſte, hear, feel or ſee, is nought for thee, does not exiſt for thee; and all thou haſt ever thought, ſhalt think, or are now thinking, muſt ariſe from the impreſſions thy ſenſes have received, which thou haſt perceived and diſtinguiſhed.

THE ſecond formule is more ſublime:—Thou ſhouldſt always act ſo, that the motive of thy actions may become a general obligatory moral law to all men.

THE third formule, the reſult of the former, runs thus: The motive of thy actions ought to ſpring from a free will; animal pleaſure-

ſure or pain ought not to have the leaſt influence over it. All thou doſt muſt be done without fear of puniſhment which may follow the action and without hope of a reward which it may merit; act only becauſe the action is good, and commanded by pure and uncorrupted reaſon*.

Mahal.

* *This ſublime principle of morality, which the Editor acknowledges as the ſole genuine and true one, and which no man has doubted, or ever will doubt, has certainly not been inſerted here to be railed at. The reaſon why it has been introduced is unequivocally manifeſt. That this Sultan Thinker and his philoſophers ſhould miſuſe it, proves as little againſt it, as common experience againſt chriſtianity, becauſe there have been bad chriſtians from its beginning to this very day, though the ſame ſublime principle is ſaid to be recommended in the Goſpel. If we take it as a rule of conduct for men to act by, it is the moſt elevated that enlightened reaſon can produce; if we compare it with daily experience, it is the moſt biting ſatire againſt men: and Lucian, Swift, and Rabelais could not have laſhed them more ſarcaſtically than theſe few words do. It is not new; for, from the ancient philoſophers down to the Platonic Shafteſbury, many have ſtrongly*

Mahal. Though I conceive all this pretty well, yet I don't remember to have found in my travels one man who acted in conformity with those magic formules as you call them. Every one acted just as if he were the only individual in the world.

Ram. And this you'll find here too; yet it is good and useful to remind men frequently, how they should be. The only difficulty is, that we cannot quite cure the Copts of the sensation of pleasure and reluctance, and that they always continue to fear and to hope.

BESIDES

ly inculcated it; but none more forcibly than the woman in Damascus, whom the ambassador of Louis King of France, commonly called St. Louis, saw in the streets, with fire in one hand, and water in the other. The ambassador asking the reason of so singular an appearance, she answered in the spirit of this principle: "With the fire I will burn Paradise, with the water extinguish the fire of Hell, that men may worship God for his own sake, and not as mercenary labourers." That this principle may become a general practice, it only requires that this and that may happen," and till then it may serve as the test to judge the world of human actions.

Besides this, there are a few little contradictions; but so very trifling these are, that the Sultan only laughs at them. We say, for instance, Man is free; he depends entirely upon the laws of his reason, which, he of course imposes on himself. Since reason constitutes, properly speaking, his own self, man is naturally his own legislator. But against this a fourth formule expresseth, The sultan is your unbounded lord; his will is your law; this you ought to obey, however repugnant it may be, in your opinion, to the laws of your reason.

Much as the Sultan subjects himself to the laws of his reason, he still cannot forget he is sultan; and a sultan, my good friend, must command many things in opposition to reason; and hence it probably arises, that nothing is more difficult for him than to be a philosopher at the same time, because the peculiarity of his office, and the claims and pretensions that flow from it, are so inconsistent with philosophy. Every sultan also makes use of the false notions of pleasure and pain, of will and reluctance, which, though they have caused all the evils in society, have nevertheless kept it in motion. Without them it would but little be worth our while to philosophize with

Sultan

Sultan Thinker. But all this will be brought about, provided we once pull out the pernicious weeds that grow up by the ſide of reaſon.

Mahal. I underſtand nothing of all this.

Ram. Why ſhouldſt thou? It would be a pretty buſineſs to philoſophize, if fellows like thee did immediately underſtand what has coſt us ſo many hours thinking.

Mahal. But why doſt thou then tell me of it?

Ram. To make thee a greater fool than thou actually art, and to teach thee new words. Let me now go on with my ſtory.

THE old Sultan called his ſecond ſon Gripik, which in our language means "*Beautifier.*" He gave him this name becauſe he attempted to beautify and embelliſh every thing that fell into his hands, regardleſs of its being ſuſceptible or not of his intended ornaments. He daubed men, animals, and all his play-things with glittering and dazzling colours. He cut and carved every thing, to give it a better form than nature or art had given it. From his earlieſt infancy he ſpoke alſo in high ſounding and choſen ſentences,

was fond of, and ſelected every thing above the common mode of expreſſion, couched all he ſpoke in grand and ſublime images, and ſeemed to be all fancy himſelf. His father procured him a preceptor of the ſame caſt; and under his tuition he became ſo refined in the taſte of the beautiful and ſublime, that all common-place phraſes and things became inſupportable to him. He was a perſon of the moſt tender feelings, of the fineſt taſte, and of ſo ſublime a ſenſe, that every thing related in the plain ſhape of truth became a torment to him. Every one at his court walked on ſolemn ſtilts, and ſpoke in metaphors, allegories, and other figurative images. His father pitched upon the Sullahers as his ſubjects, a lively and gay people, quite devoted to joy and delight. Every thing is ſaid to go on in a grand and magnificent manner at Sullah; every body lives in the enjoyment of the beautiful and ſublime, riots in fancy, ſings all the virtues, eſpecially thoſe of Sultan Beautifier; and it is even reported, they talk of God in that country, becauſe he is a grand, magnificent, myſterious, and poetical ſubject. Our philoſophers pretend that the Sullahers, with their delicious and elevated feelings, loſe not only all ſenſe of truth, but even forget in the tickle of their imagination to do that which

ſoſters the fire of that fair enchantreſs; and that the conſequences of the poetic *mania*, are already felt at Sullah. But philoſophers or thinkers ſeldom ſpeak well of beautifiers, and theſe in their turn rarely praiſe thinkers.

The Caliph. How true the Prophet ſpeaks of poets: "*Bereft of their ſenſes they run about in the vallies, and talk what they do not perform.*"

Mahal. Such was exactly the caſe before the Flood, and, as the Prophet proves, ſtill is.

"THE third ſon," continued Ram, "was called Sultan Pah, which in the common Arabic ſignifies the *Simple*. This Pah was of ſo common a caſt, that he neither ſeemed to think profoundly, nor to feel the beautiful, but went through the neceſſary functions of life like every other vulgar man. He did not care how he did a thing, whether by his own free will or from neceſſity, through inclination or averſion, or by the laws of reaſon: in ſhort, all he was charged to do, he did as eagerly and faithfully as a beaſt of burthen, whoſe qualities, my dear Mahal, muſt ſtill be recent in thy memory. His father, finding ſo little remarkable in him, wiſely left him

to

to his own innate ſimplicity, and gave him no other tutor. Him he reſerved to be the Sultan of the Mullahers, a rough unpoliſhed people, but boaſting of one quality, which our Sultan is endeavouring to ſecure likewiſe to the Copts.. They know nothing more of God, and have totally forgotten him; they plant, ſow, reap, hunt, fiſh, eat and drink, lie with their wives, know not whence they come, whither they ſhall go, nor even enquire about it! It is a ſtupid, healthy, happy and ſtrong people, that bids defiance to death itſelf; and if the God, with whom thou pretendeſt to have ſpoken, intends to deſtroy them along with us cultivated and refined people, verily he will deſtroy men who, as they know nothing of him, are incapable of giving offence to his greatneſs.

The Caliph. Let this Ram ſay no more.

Ben Haſi. It ſerves to bring us to the right purpoſe, which otherwiſe we ſhall miſs.—— "But this," reſumed Ram, "is not my buſineſs, but thy God's. What, Mahal, thou turneſt pale!—Be eaſy, I beg, and thy ear will ſoon accuſtom itſelf to all this."

The Caliph. What fatality, that Mahal ſhould have fallen in with this blaſphemous Ram!

Ram! I think, Ben Hafi, it is the bad ſpirit Ebiis himſelf, who, in the form of Ram, tries to make Mahal deſert his God.

Ben Hafi. It might be ſo, and the maſk of philoſophy might beſt anſwer ſuch a purpoſe; but all is very natural in this tale, and Ram is nothing but a man.——"There are ſome people here," continued Ram, "who maintain, that the old ſultan would have done better to have made the profound Thinker ſultan over the airy Sullahers, and the ſublime Beautifier ruler over the capricious and humourſome Copts. Others even go ſo far as to ſay, that the three empires ought to have been left to Sultan Simple, becauſe he would have ruled men in their own way. But we philoſophers know better. And behold, Mahal, ſo dull and daſtardly are men, as to quit the refined empires of Copha and Sullah to ſettle among the wild Mullahers, while none of the latter come over to us! Sultan Thinker is of opinion, that all this will be brought about; and who of us would attempt to leſſen his hopes?

"The old Sultan was lying on his death-bed, ſurrounded by the three heirs of his thrones. He made a long ſpeech, and confeſſed, as ſultans will ſometimes do, his faults, of which he now for the firſt time repented. This

This is a very good cuſtom of dying ſultans; but a pity it is that it avails nothing, ſince that which is done cannot be undone, and the heirs during the confeſſion, generally think of ſomething elſe, rather than gather uſeful advice and warning from ſuch a confeſſion.—This was alſo the caſe here. Simple wailed and wept like a raw, uncultivated man, at the approaching loſs of his father; Sultan Beautifier was making a fine funeral oration in his mind; and Sultan Thinker ſecretly laughed at the old fool, who talked of ſins againſt his people, and a Being which he even then thought of diſcarding as ſuperfluous. He alſo was of opinion, that it was time that a man who knew ſo little about the laws of reaſon, ſhould make room for him who intended to govern entirely by theſe laws. To prevent irkſomeneſs, he reſolved to watch what ſhould leave his father with his laſt breath, whether it was nothing or ſome little body. Sultan Beautifier ran away at the firſt agonies of death that he might not ſee thoſe horrid convulſions. Simple continued wailing; and Thinker was inwardly provoked againſt his vulgar brother, and cannot pardon him his weakneſs to this very day. A few moments before his exit the old Sultan ſaid, 'I am very eaſy about my two eldeſt

eldeſt ſons: the one has wit, the other ſenſibility; but Simple! poor Simple!' The latter now kiſſed his father's hands, laid another pillow under his head, and the old man ſunk into his arms and died. Simple remained alone with his father's corpſe, and wept over it.—Sultan Thinker has related all this to me with a great deal of philoſophic pride, adding that having ſeen nothing leave his father's body when he expired, he concluded that nothing could have been in it.

"After Sultan Beautifier had read his fine funeral oration, Simple wept his fill, and Thinker railed as much as he could at both, every one followed his deſtination. Each of them ſeated himſelf on his golden throne; and all goes wonderfully well, at leaſt at Cophs, where I congratulate thee on thy arrival.—Now I muſt go to the Sultan to announce thee to him, as a perſon very ſuſceptible of improvement and perfection. Take care not to play any of thy old tricks; and to prevent it as much as poſſible, I will ſit by thy ſide."

Ram announced his gueſt to the Sultan, who gave orders to introduce him at the firſt meeting into the hall of *Reaſon*. The Sultan's palace contained three halls of aſſembly, viz. the

the hall of Reaſon, the hall of Truth, and the hall of Light; but in theſe three halls there was ſeldom any thing reaſonable, true, or clear to be heard; and they reſembled in this reſpect many of the philoſophical aſſembly-halls after the Flood, though theſe are not ſo ſplendidly decorated, nor to be found at the palaces of ſultans. Waiting the period of his public appearance, Ram preſented his friend privately to the Sultan; and Mahal being then but a liſtener to their diſcourſe, they thought him a very promiſing ſubject, and even aſſured him of their protection. But the opinion which Mahal conceived of them was far from being ſo favourable; for he felt his mind grow darker and darker, and ſhuddered when they ſo raſhly cut aſunder the knot, which he had always been ſo anxious to untie.

The day came on which Mahal was publicly to appear in the hall of Reaſon. Ram introduced him. Sultan Thinker was ſeated among his brethren, without any mark to diſtinguiſh his power. Here reigned univerſal equality, and a man's merit was only meaſured in proportion to his reaſon. On the wall of the aſſembly-hall the above mentioned magic formules were engraven in golden characters.

ters. Sultan Thinker was a thin, haggard-looking figure, of a pale countenance, sufficiently expressive of his proud self-complacency. Mahal was desired to sit facing him, and begin to relate his story without any farther formalites. Ram took a seat next to him. The whole assembly heard him very attentively for some time, and even nodded approbation at the description of his ardent thirst for knowledge; but when he mentioned how God had appeared to him, Sultan Thinker burst out into a loud laugh, which was repeated by the whole assembly, while the hall of Reason re-echoed with peals of philosophic mirth. Mahal sat there like a man suddenly surprised and beat by a superior enemy.

Ram, who had foreseen the effect it would have, smiled now and said to the Sultan, "Pity the poor silly man, and rather let him feel the penetratio of thy wisdom, and the point of thy wit."

Mahal was going to reply but Ram prevented him, saying, "I put thee thou seest, in a fair way; hold thy tongue and provoke not these Thinkers here, else thou wilt not get off so well as thou didst at Gia and Farak."

Sultan

SULTAN THINKER seemed for some minutes lost in thought, and all the assembly kept a profound silence. At last he opened his pale lips, assumed the posture of an all-confuting philosopher, and all his brethren's looks were directed towards him.

Sultan Thinker. Stranger, thou sayest thou hast seen God!

Mahal. That I have!

Sultan Thinker. Then thou must have seen him in human, or in some other shape; thou must have heard him speak in a human, or some other language intelligible to thee?

Mahal. To be sure, I have!

Sultan Thinker. Well! If thou hast seen God in human form, and heard him speak with a human voice, thou hast not seen God, nor heard a divine voice, but seen a human form, and heard a human voice. We know nothing of God, because he did not want us to know any thing of him. We are all convinced that we cannot conceive him with our senses; and what we cannot conceive with our senses, is nothing to us. If we think any thing under this idea, or if we fancy as if we thought

thought something under it, we say comparatively according to the measure of our senses: He is infinite, immensurable, unattainable and invisible to the eye of man. You see all these are opposites to our being. We may also call him the creator and preserver of all things, without expressing any clear and distinct thought by it, because our senses can comprehend nothing of it; and what our senses cannot comprehend is nothing; nor can ever become truth to us, by virtue of the first formule of our laws.

"MAN of the Mountain! If, as thou pretendest, thou hast seen God in some form, thou hast seen him contained in and limited to this form. If thou hast seen him contained in and limited to this form, he was then neither infinite nor immensurable, nor omnipotent, nor invisible to the eye—but he was in that moment finite, mensurable, attainable, visible, and limited in his power, like all of us here, who are contained in our bodies. It is farther said, that his spirit penetrates all the worlds, and all that is and lives upon and in them. These worlds must therefore at that moment have concentred and sunk into his finite and limited form. And since they did not sink and fall down together in the moment when

when thou ſaweſt God in a human figure, and ſince we are all here ſtill with thoſe worlds, both we and they could exiſt at that moment without his influence: and if we and they could exiſt during thy converſation with him, without his influence, we and all could ſpring alſo into exiſtence without him. Or wert thou to ſay that thou only ſaweſt part of him concealed in that form, thou wouldſt again diſſolve his being by thinking him diviſible.—Thou haſt therefore talked non-ſenſe, or haſt ſeen ſome phantom."

THE loudeſt burſts of applauſe followed this ſpeech of Sultan Thinker, who coolly looked at the ſhuddering and confuſed Mahal. The latter wanted to riſe with impetuous zeal, but Ram forcibly kept him on his ſeat, ſaying "Hold thy tongue; I tell thee once more, that this Sultan and his friends are far more dangerous than all the ſultans and gods thou haſt ſeen."

The Caliph (with enthuſiaſm and indignation). Bleſſed be God Almighty! *Ye believe and ſhall die, and ſhall riſe again. Behold there is a man diſputing about God, without the knowledge and guidance of a revealed book! He winds himſelf in his ſpirit, to ſeduce men*

from

from the way of the Lord. Disgrace shall be his reward in this world; and on the day when the mother, forgetting her suckling panting with thirst, shall not hear his moans; on the day of resurrection shall he suffer the torments of the fire. The infidels shall be dressed in flaming garments, boiling water shall be poured on their heads to dissolve their skin and their bowels, and they shall be beaten with iron clubs.

Ben Hasi. Regardless of Ram's admonition and threats, Mahal could not help opening his quivering lips, crying, "I saw no phantom then; but now I see faces before me more horrid than any which human folly ever presented to my sight. O ye Atheists!"—Sultan Thinker replied: "It is thy story we want. We neither affirm nor negative the existence of thy God. What does not chooſe to be comprehended, and is not to be comprehended, becomes for us a pure non entity. What thou hast been saying of him is presumption, and presumption ought not to raise her voice in the hall of Reason. Thou mayst amuse me with thy tales at table." Mahal now continued his story; and mentioning his commission from the Lord, the assembly humourously took it for some allegory, which afforded them

them a good deal of ridicule. He then related his adventures at the courts of the different Sultans. Though Sultan Thinker considered all those princes as fools, he still thought them prudent for styling themselves gods. He said, "Man requires a sensual representation of the might and power set over him; and as the idea of God baffles all comprehension, and degenerates into nonsense, its utility cannot be better sensualized than by the image of a reigning sultan; and such is the plan we meditate."

MAHAL, having finished his narrative, proposed the following questions: "Now ye, who, from your own words, know so much and yet so little, who have confounded my understanding much more by what you have spoken, illumine me only in one point, and tell me, why is man not better than I find him here, and have found him every where? Why is he so very bad? What may be the cause? Is it within or without him? And shew me plainly the source of his folly and wickedness."

ONE of the Thinkers or Philosophers coolly replied, "Friend, man is neither good nor bad."

Mahal. Then I wish thou hadst travelled in my place; hadst been in danger to be castrated at Enoch, used as a beast of burthen at Irad, stabbed at Gin, compelled to read for twenty tedious moons the stupendous works of the Grand Vizier of Farak, and been whipped at last for a change.

The First Philosopher. And what proves this? That which thou sufferedst there appeared to thee as bad, but it only was so in regard to thyself. To those who did it, it was good, useful and salutary. Wert thou wiser than thou seemest to me, thy experience would have taught thee better. Since that which appears an evil to thee, may prove a benefit to others, and that which appears a benefit to thee, an evil to others, thou mayest plainly perceive, that good and evil are only two words to denote that which in our consideration is individually beneficial or hurtful.

Second Philosopher. This detestable doctrine has unfortunately experience in its favour, and even seems to be the motive of all human actions: but he thinks not wisely that is buried in the mire of selfishness; he rather shows the elevated height on which man may stand, ought to stand, and one day shall stand.

By

By this horrid doctrine neither our Sultan nor we are in safety of life or property. For a Copt need but deem any crime against him or us practicable in point of execution, and himself safe from the danger of being discovered, to be easily excited to the commission of it by thy doctrine of utility. Would not the evil he would commit upon the Sultan, or any of us, be a benefit to him? I say man is bad, because he is the sport of inclination and disinclination; because he does not weigh and fix his actions according to the laws of reason, which it prescribes to itself; and does not act without fear or hope.

Ram. Mahal might still ask whence this comes: and I doubt as little of the answer thou mightest give as of that thou hast already given. But, to instruct this animal of a man, I ask thee, Whence come those laws?

Second Philosopher. From Reason, the supreme legislator.

First Philosopher. Then there is indeed no writer, no legislator, whose commands are less obeyed than hers. All men, thou thyself acteth by the instinct of the flesh, the excitement of pleasure, interest, the sensation of

of pain; and all this reduces human life to one clear, definite and plain principle, that can alone be comprehended by our ſenſes, and agrees, as thou ſayeſt, with experience. Beſides it, there is nothing but doubt, contradiction, or illuſion. In what a ſhocking light muſt man then appear, if, as thou telleſt us, he carries about with him thoſe laws acknowledged by his reaſon and inculcated by his ſupreme legiſlator, if he can hourly ſit and read them, and ſtill acts as if he knew no other law but that of intereſt and ſelfiſhneſs! Either thoſe laws of reaſon are not quite ſo plain and intelligible, the eye that is to ſee them not duly organized for them, or he that is to read them underſtands not the language in which they are written; or the ſtronger, the more powerful and common animal inſtincts cover them with a cloud at the moment they are to decide an intended action. Is it ſo? Whoſe fault is it? If man were intended to live in conformity to thoſe laws of his reaſon, it is they, and not his ſenſes, that ought to govern.

Second Philoſopher. Thy contradiction is clear nonſenſe. The law of reaſon exiſts and ſpeaks aloud, and is given to regulate inclination

nation and diſinclination in ſuch a manner that none may gratify either at the expence of the other.

Firſt Philoſopher. Every one in the world lives at the expence of others: the wor'd itſelf ſubſiſts on its own materials, and feeds and deſtroys itſelf in order to exiſt.

Sultan Thinker. We ſpeak of men here, not of animals. Men certainly are neither more nor leſs than they can be; but ſages and their rulers can make much of them, even that for which they don't ſeem to be formed. Hence man is the wonder of animated nature. Conſtantly actuated by inſtincts and deſires, we fetter him with the cold but brilliant chain of reaſon, and tie him to the law exiſting within himſelf, by which he can conquer every thing except neceſſity. Even ſtruggling and cruſhed under neceſſity's painful yoke, he eludes it ſo far by reaſon, that this yoke may overwhelm, but not compel him to act againſt her laws. This ſurely is no eaſy taſk, and requires ſuch men as we ſtrive to become, and as we wiſh to form the Copts—men of a ſuperior kind, who do good for the ſake of good, who fulfil their duty for the ſake of duty, who act from a free will, and never

loſe ſight of the formules of reaſon and morality. If once we ſhall bring matters thus far, we ſhall have triumphed over evil, and be equal to that which ſome imagine the gods to be.

Firſt Philoſopher. The good would then alſo be rooted out; for what were it without the bad? If the good became neceſſity, as the bad ſeems unfortunately to have become, where would be the merit of the good man? Let that moment come, which is ſtill diſtant, and probably never will come, and we ſhall ſink into cold indifference, in which thoſe may live whom the poets at the court of your brother Beautifier ſometimes ſing, to fill their high ſounding and empty verſes with images.

Sultan Thinker. So much the better: then we ſhall be gods in the form of men.

Ram. I don't riſe, mighty Sultan, to refute thy arguments, but to make thy wit ſhine at my own expence. Yes, we ſhall become gods, and ſuch gods, to whom their humanity will remain a profound myſtery, and who will not know what to think of this word, ſo ſoon as they ſhall apply it to their deſtination, and weigh the oppoſite and contradictory

tradictory means that are to lead them to it. It is in vain to aſk, why man is bad? whether the bad ſprings from the neceſſity of his nature, or from his depraved will? In each ſcale lies the truth, but alſo doubt and contradiction: which ever we ſeize, we cannot lay hold of one without the other. Man is born to obſcurity; at leaſt to a clear kind of obſcurity, and he never will know any thing certain of his origin or deſtination, as he never will be able to comprehend that upon which, in the opinion of many, he is ſaid to depend. Therefore, as we feel the inſtinct of evil, and cannot comprehend any thing of God, who is ſaid to reward the good and to puniſh the evil in the manner man is accuſtomed to comprehend, nothing can bind us ſprung from the earth, which feeds and torments us with the ills annexed to her, but that which binds the beaſt, which, like us, lives and dies on her. The greedieſt devourer, the beſt hunter, is the biggeſt man among us. What makes us be that, I need not develop to men who aſſemble in the hall of Reaſon. But to return to the chief point on which every thing finally depends: there have been fools and ſages, and there may ſtill be ſome, who, by a ſomething in themſelves, which can be as little comprehended as ſenſually underſtood,

derſtood, have put themſelves in connection with another world, who have aſſerted that thoſe who live according to the laws of reaſon will ſee the light after death, acknowledge the being of God, and experience all which we had had moſt occaſion to know on earth.

The Caliph. Oh, that I were as deaf as my faithful Maſul!

Ben Hafi. Ram continued: "It may be ſo. For who can tell what can be and what cannot be? But I aſk, How ſhall men know the being of God? Wholly or partially? Are they to become ſo perfect as not to leave one obſcure ſpot in their illumined ſpirit? If they comprehend the being of God entirely, they muſt become equal to him; and the finite and limited muſt then become infinite and illimited, elſe the meaſure of their comprehenſion of the infinite will fall too ſhort. If they comprehend him but partially, the old plague which torments us on earth will remain, becauſe the leaſt obſcure ſpot that remains unenlightened in their mind will throw a dark ſhade over the bright parts, and render thoſe ſo near to perfection equally liable to the faulty and defective, as we in our total darkneſs have the good or bad fortune to ſhow ourſelves.

"In-

"If you wish to admit a scale of gradation, as we do in the created world; and say, the chain of spirits ascends and descends, you will have the same sensual ladder there which you have here, from the most perfect spirit, such for instance as our Sultan is, down to the worm; and he that is next to the throne of the unknown mystic being must comparatively be remoter from him than we are from our Sultan. If they comprehended entirely the invisible Sultan as we do our visible one, they would be as equal to theirs as we are to ours, and find no more to admire in theirs than we do in ours. And so would the Lord of the Heavens want Spirits about him, who would find nothing to admire in him! He would find them as tedious as a visible Sultan his grandees, were they to be in such a relation with him.—I don't know to what all this tends. There is something monstrous in the thought, that this Being, to whom every thing is said to owe its existence and preservation, should sit wrapped up in the dark, in full satisfaction and self enjoyment, and hide itself from us, while the ardent thirst of our knowledge constantly prompts us to recognize it."

The Caliph. *Believe, children of the Prophet! when the inevitable day of judgment shall*

shall come, some will be lowered, others exalted. When the earth shall tremble at the dreadful shock, you will be ranged in three different classes: in those at the right: (How happy will be those at the right!)—in those at the left (How miserable will be those at the left!)—and in those who surpassed the rest in belief. These shall precede you in paradise. They shall be the next to God, and dwell in the gardens of delight. They shall repose themselves facing each other, on beds decorated with gold and precious stones. Ever-blooming youths shall walk about them, attend them, and fill their cups with perfumed wine. This wine shall not oppress their head, nor confound their understanding. They shall present fruits to them, which they shall pick out, and the flesh of the birds which they shall desire. Virgins with large black eyes, white like the ostrich's egg, like the pearl hidden in its shell, shall be their companions, as a reward for their actions. There they shall hear no idle talk, no reproach of sin, but only this salutation, Peace! Peace! Try, children of the Apostle, to exceed others in belief. And those at the right (How happy are those at the right!) —shall dwell under bushes of the lotetree without thorns, under acacia trees without thorns, always laden with their flowers from the foot

to

to the top. Near ever-flowing waters, beneath wide and cooling shades, beneath never-failing fruits, which they may gather at pleasure, shall they sit and rest upon high beds.— Verily we have created the virgins of paradise, and moschus is the stuff of which we have formed them. And we have created them virgins, that they may be loved by those allied with them who shall be of the same age. And they shall only look at him that is joined to them, and dwell in great and splendid tents. Believe me, Musulmen, this will be your lot!

Ben Hasi. Mahal now said to Ram:— "Thou art the most detestable among them all."

Ram. Hold thy tongue; there are fools about me, and thou art not indeed the least of them.

The Caliph. Done with this blasphemy! I'll hear no more to-night; and let not that unbelieving Ram speak in to-morrow's tale, else I shall be obliged to go from my word.

Ben Hasi. I have only to add a few more words. On quitting the hall of Reason, Mahal said to Ram: "This day have I discovered among you the source of presumption, of

folly

folly and corruption, which I ſo long have ſought. It is KNOWLEDGE.

Ram (ſmiling). Always ſtick to it; it is a ſource that flows wide, ſtrong and copious, and on it thou mayeſt ſafely navigate for the diſcovery of all the reſt. But why do we poſſeſs it, with its inſtinct? The child that comes from its mother's womb, and ſees the light, already lays the firſt foundation for knowledge—Can the bantling help it?

The Caliph. Ben Haſi, peace be with thee!

THIR-

THIRTEENTH EVENING.

Ben Hafs. SINCE your Highneſs ſeels averſe to hearing any farther the ſpeeches of the ſuppoſed philoſophical Sultan and his friends, I will not attempt to read to you the brilliant oration delivered by Ram in the hall of Light, which had for its conſequence Sultan Thinker's reſolution, to beat in pieces the wiſe and ſimple ſymbol of the Deity, expoſed from the remoteſt ages in a temple, and to ſubſtitute his own image in its place, that the Copts might have a ſenſible repreſentation of might and power before their eyes.

THE day fixed for the ſolemn inauguration of the Sultan's ſtatue was to be celebrated as a great feaſt throughout the empire of Cophta.

THE Sultan, attended by his philoſophers, including Mahal, repaired to the temple The penſive Copts had crowded the large edifice, when Sultan Thinker addreſſed them in a ſpeech on the incomprehenſible and the ſymbol which was to ſenſualize him, and demonſtrated that all the ills which had hitherto deſolated his

his dominions originated from this senseless usage.

At the conclusion of this speech the Sultan and his philosophers laid each hold of an ax. The Sultan gave the first stroke, and the philosophers followed him, till the image was beat into a thousand pieces. But suddenly a circumstance occurred, at which the Sultan and his retinue were alike thunderstruck.

The bird Phœnix, that rises again from his ashes, and is the image of the mussulman on the tremendous day of judgment, soared with his brilliant wings out of a large ball of bronze, which burst with a terrible explosion, and held a manuscript in his beak. A voice at the same time resounded: "This is the Koran, of which the generations now living shall never become worthy."

Gabriel, the prince of angels, had, dread Lord, hidden it in this ball by God's command; and it is a sign to the faithful, that the Koran shall once rule the whole world. The Phœnix brought the wholly book to the prince of angels, the prince of angels delivered it to the Most Holy, and the Most Holy laid it down by his exalted throne, till mankind

kind should become worthy of it. Thousands of years elapsed, Mahomet, the apostle whom God had chosen, appeared, and God sent and revealed to him by his servant Gabriel the most sacred of books.

THE CALIPH, *Praised be God Almighty! There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet!*

Ben Hasi. Behold, Lord of Believers, this is the mysterious circumstance to which I alluded in the beginning of the story last night, when I assured your Highness that it would please you very much.

The Caliph. So it does; it is true, because it is revealed. Those atheists made me tremble with horror, but now I am comforted. I am satisfied with thee, Ben Hasi: thou shalt never want at my court, and mayest now continue thy tale.

Ben Hasi. The pensive Copts cried with one voice; "A miracle!" The Sultan and his friends remained quite puzzled for many minutes, when Ram, taking courage, boldly exclaimed: "Why do you wonder at the gross deception of the priests of this temple? It is they that have hidden this bird in the ball,

ball, and made it burſt by ſome artificial contrivance, to blind the people, to preſerve their lucrative trade of ſuperſtition, and to counteract the illumination of the Copts."

THE Copts were obliged to believe. The ſtatue of the Sultan was then raiſed, and on its pedeſtal the laws of reaſon, or the formules, were engraven in golden characters. Thus was Mahal reſerved to witneſs the ſummit of human madneſs and temerity. Fired with indignation, he returned with the court to the palace, and over a feſtive banquet took an opportunity to preach the vengeance of the Lord to the Sultan, which had however no other effect, than to make him the object of the jokes and deriſion of the company. From this moment, Sultan Thinker only conſidered him as the whetſtone of his wit, and for this reaſon alone ſuffered him to abide in his preſence.

THE grave and capricious Copts, who were now to do nothing for fear of puniſhment or in hope of reward, laughed in their hearts at the ſymbol of a God who corporeally appeared before them, and who, in defiance of the laws of Reaſon, did ſo many things inconſiſtent with their rigid tenour. They talked a great deal of thoſe laws, followed

all

all the while the impreſſions of pleaſure and pain, but made ſuch keen and long reflections upon the motives of their actions and the purity of their will, that, had not hunger diverted their attention, the whole machine of the ſtate muſt ſoon have ſtood ſtill, and their teachers would have broken with their own hands the tables of thoſe laws, to prevent being totally cut off from all farther philoſophizing. Meanwhile thoſe thinkers did every thing to ſubvert the whole ſtructure of the ſtate; and to effect this, nothing more was required, than a rude blow from ſome unphiloſophical hand. The moſt ſenſible of the Copts went to ſettle in the dominions of Sultan Simple, to whom they gave ſuch a ſingular deſcription of his brother's government, that, partly from curioſity, partly from good nature, he reſolved to viſit Sultan Thinker's court, to ſee with his own eyes the miracles he wrought, and which drove ſo many of his ſubjects from his dominions. Attended by a few rough and uncultivated Mullahers, he arrived at Copha the very moment that his brother was ſitting with his philoſophical friends in the hall of Reaſon, and delivering a lecture to them on illumination and moral perfection. Sultan Simple went ſtraight forward to embrace his brother; but the latter, offended at

the rude intruſion of his brother Simple and his barbarians into the hall of Reaſon, would not quit his chair, beckoned Simple to be ſeated, and continued his lecture. At its concluſion Sultan Simple ſaid with great cordiality: "Brother Thinker, I did not underſtand a word of all thou haſt been ſaying. By cultivation we Mullahers underſtand nothing but the tilling of our fields; by illumination we only mean the light of the good ſun; and if this fails, we light torches and candles.—All we know of perfection is, to be in good health, to eat and drink as much as our ſtomachs will bear, and get as many children as we can. Reaſon we don't know, and leſs ſtill can we read that which thou ſayeſt is written in it. As for God, he is no more in Mullah, nor have we any image of him, ſuch as thou haſt expoſed in thy perſon. I long to ſee the curious thing that makes ſo much noiſe abroad. In other reſpects, the Mullahs will gladly obey me if I command what is right. If I command what is wrong or foolish, they boldly tell me of it, and don't obey me. They are not at all afraid of death, but ſtick to that which they think is beſt and the moſt prudent; and, methinks, they know much better, than myſelf, what is good or hurtful to them. I am now come hither,

brother, to admire thee, to observe thy method of government, of which I comprehend nothing, and to learn something from thee. Shew me the way, how I am to admire thee: and tell me, first of all: Whence happens it, that, notwithstanding thy wisdom and thy wonders, so many Copts come over to the rough Mullahers, and no Mullaher takes the trouble to settle among thy Copts?"

The Caliph. "At such question for a simpleton, I'll warrant me! It was perhaps the cleverest ever asked in this hall of Reason.

Sultan Simple. "Hearken, Illustrious Simplicity, that remained the old belief, quite born to be a [illegible] people whom our prophet has given over to [illegible], or rather to be governed by them. Weakness and simplicity are a good match; for this reason they have chosen to have sent it home rather than shew thy ignorance before [illegible]. But I will tell thee, why the wild Mullahers do not transmigrate and settle among us. Why do not the beasts of the wood come to us?

Sultan Simple. Because they are beasts, and find themselves very well where they are.

THE whole philosophical assembly laughed

at

at this anſwer. Sultan Simple himſelf joined them in the roar, and at length ſaid: "Now I know why the beaſts of the woods don't come to you; 'tis becauſe they cannot laugh at you."

However innocently Simple uttered theſe words, his brother nevertheleſs felt the point of them, and gravely retorted: "Brother Simple, the brutes do not come to us, becauſe they are incapable of reaſon; and the Mullahers don't ſettle among us, becauſe they are ſtill choked up with ignorance, and, like their brethren of the foreſt, only follow the inſtinct of the fleſh. My Copts go to dwell in thy dominions, becauſe, as enlightened men, they wiſh to ſpread the light I have kindled in them, as far as poſſible upon earth. But ſoon ſhalt thou experience the reſult; then thou wilt own, that thou art only capable to govern brutes, and not men."

Sultan Simple. If ſuch be the intention of thy Copts, I have plenty of time to return to Mullah, and ſend them about their buſineſs; but having till now ſhown themſelves very quiet, and relating as they do many fooliſh, ridiculous and miſchievous tricks of thee, I would fain believe that thy wiſdom made them run away, and not the intention of teaching animals, whoſe fortunate Sultan I call myſelf.—

These laſt words had ſo unpleaſant an effect upon Sultan Thinker, that he quickly broke up the meeting, and left his brother ſtanding alone in the hall, while he retired with his retinue and Mahal to his cloſet.

Sultan Simple ran all over the palace to ſeek his old acquaintances, but found none of them; for the philoſophers had turned out of their places, as uncultivated brutes, all the officers of the late Sultan. This grieved Simple to the heart. He went into a room full of manuſcripts, much ſurpriſed that his brother, whom he had come ſo far to viſit, could not ſpare an hour of his time to keep him company. He then fell aſleep, as happy as ſimplicity and innocence can be in all the different ſituations of life.

While Sultan Simple was ſoftly rocking in the arms of ſleep, his brother deliberated with his friends how to diſpoſe of the uncouth intruder. "This beaſt," exclaimed Sultan Thinker, with bitterneſs, "ought not to rule over men! It is a diſgrace to me, to reaſon and humanity! As long as ſultans like him reign, it will be impoſſible for truth to diffuſe herſelf. My brother Beautifier, too, blaſts reaſon, and by his fancy makes his ſubjects a parcel of fools!"

Sim-

Ram. Let then the philoſophers march and bring them illumination. Let us firſt go among the rude Mullahers, among whom, as thou ſayeſt, many of thy ſubjects are already gone for the ſame purpoſe.

Sultan Thinker. Ah, Ram! I did not like to tell Simple the truth of it. Thoſe fugitives are deſerters of Reaſon, who prefer ſtupidity to knowledge, becauſe they cannot act a ſhining part among us.

Ram. When I ſpeak to thee I ſpeak to a philoſopher, to a man, who, though a monarch, ſtill acknowledges another monarch above him, his clear, pure, and unprejudiced reaſon. Therefore the grandeſt and ſublimeſt taſk thou canſt undertake, is to make thy reaſon the ruler of all mankind. It would be raſhneſs and temerity to aſk if thou acknowledgſt all this.

Sultan Thinker. So it would.

Ram. Then tell me: Doſt thou deem Simple capable of being enlightened?

Sultan Thinker. Thou haſt heard proofs enough of it in the hall of Reaſon.

Ram. Then he has pronounced his own

Aſſ.

All. That he has!

SULTAN THINKER here ſeriouſly began to pauſe.

Ram. If Simple be incapable of being enlightened, he never can be enlightened. If he, as chief of the Mullahers, can never be enlightened, knowledge cannot be transferred from him to the Mullahers, who will remain in ignorance. If they remain in ignorance, [illegible] impoſſible thy light ſhould ſpread farther [illegible] this—this is the moſt trifling part of [illegible]

Sultan Thinker (ſtarting). What dareſt [illegible]

Ram. Hem!—I ſay, that the rude, ſtupid and wild Mullahers may in courſe of time be very dangerous neighbours to thy refined, enlightened and penſive Copts. Knowledge is a very excellent thing for the mind, but not often for the body; frequently it grows [illegible] expence of the ſtrength of the body; [illegible] it ſhould come to blows between the Copts and Mullahers—

Sultan Thinker. Thou goeſt too far—The man of ſenſe triumphs always over animals, [illegible] not by the ſword, at leaſt by ſtratagem.

Ram. Which proves the weakneſs of the body. It is beſt not to let it come ſo far. Deprive the animal of his rude and dangerous ſtrength: ſo did our anceſtors with the horſe and the bull. Remember that the Mullahers have not forgotten that thy father ſubdued them by force. To all this I have only to add, that, as Sultan Simple will remain an animal over animals, and theſe animals are to be humanized, Sultan Simple cannot remain Sultan in Mullah.

Sultan Thinker (ſmiling). And who ſhould reign in his place?

Ram. Who elſe but the ſun that enlightens Copha? Is it not a duty incumbent on thee to ſubvert the irrational arrangements of thy father, and to place thyſelf gradually on the three thrones which he formerly occupied.

Sultan Thinker. All this is excellent; but—

Ram. I can ſee but one difficulty, which is inſupportable to any ſyſtematic thinker; for the firſt ſtep to form thoſe uncultivated Mullahers, would oblige thee to impreſs them with the idea of a God. Since thou haſt taken this idea from the Copts, how canſt thou conſiſtently—

Sultan

Sultan Thinker. I never will do it; and why ſhould I?

Ram. Why, it is ſingular enough. The firſt ſtep of refinement you ſee is the idea of a God; and the laſt, that I mean which ſeals all illumination, is to reject him. I think we have demonſtrated this in Copha, and all we ſeek in Mullah is, that the Mullahers may become by art, and in proceſs of time, what they are by nature. We need no longer that idea, ſince it muſt not be the motive of our actions; for were it the motive of our actions, it would not be reaſon that excites us, but fear and hope, love or reſpect, which are reſolvable into the two former impure ones.—There is nothing but bondage every where, and this we hate. But we will talk more largely on this topic when we ſhall once be maſters of Mullah.

Sultan Thinker. And how ſhall we manage to accompliſh this purpoſe?

Ram. Nothing can be eaſier. Art thou not Simplo's next heir by ſeniority? If I want to inherit of ſomebody, ſomething muſt firſt happen that can make me his heir. I will not utter the word, becauſe every enlightened

man deteſts the idea of diſſolution. If thou really art the man thou ſeemeſt to be, thou mayeſt in this reſpect infringe the tables of the laws of Reaſon, and throw a veil over one of them. Beſides, an uſeleſs animal may alſo be ſhut up, and ſuffered to live according to its ſenſes, till it has worn them out.

Sultan Thinker. We ſhall conſider it.—Certain it is, that Simple is in the ſnare; and we ſhould be like him, were we to let him eſcape. Meanwhile be friendly to him: I will invite him to a meeting to-morrow, and if he remain what he now is, we ſhall deliberate on other meaſures. At any rate, he will not do for a ſultan.

Ram. This is what I have proved.

At night they wheedled Sultan Simple, and occaſionally made him their ſcoff, as they did Mahal. Simple perceived nothing. In the morning an invitation was brought him to come to the hall of Wiſdom; but no Simple was to be found.

The Caliph. I am glad of it!

Ben Hafi. When Ram heard of his eſcape, he ſaid to Mahal, "Thou art the cauſe of Simple's

Simple's eſcape; thou haſt betrayed our deſign to him."

Mahal. To be ſure, I have; nor do I care if I loſe my life for it, becauſe it is a burthen to me among you.

Ram. Still thou haſt heard us ſay, that we mean to inſtruct the Mullahers in the knowledge of God; thine is now the fault if they remain in ignorance.

Mahal. You are deteſtable, both with and without God.

Ram. How didſt thou manage it to apprize him of our intention?

Mahal. By communicating it to one of his ſuite.

Ram. Say not a word of it to any body. Thou haſt done very well; and this made me ſpeak as I did in the preſence of the Sultan. I was confident of thy zeal's prompting thee to do as thou haſt done, and ſhould be very ſorry if any harm had befallen Simple.

Mahal. Who can comprehend thee, ſerpent?

Ram.

Ram. Call me as thou pleaſeſt. I hate all theſe fools here, nor have I forgotten the whipping at Enoch. Be eaſy, thou ſhalt ſee much more, till thou art blind with ſeeing, and ſtupid with apprehenſion. Here thou art at the ſource of wiſdom, and in proportion as thou draweſt from it, thou wilt become either a fool, an empty nothing, or a villain: as to the former, thou needeſt not become it.

Mahal. If I am grown a fool, it has been with you; but before any ſuch thing takes place, I'll back to my mountain, and there weep over you till I am dead.

Ram. Only look what a fool thou art! But never mind, and follow my counſel: ſince thou art a crying and not a laughing fool, I will become thy benefactor, by ſupplying thee with ſubjects for crying. I ſhall find means faſt enough to help thee back to the mountain.

After this dialogue Ram and Mahal went to Sultan Thinker, whom they found among his friends, quite enraged at his brother's eſcape. Ram plainly told him there muſt be a traitor among the philoſophers, becauſe Simple was too ſtupid to have gueſſed ſuch a deſign.

ſign. "But be eaſy, Sultan," continued he, "if he went to thy brother Beautifier, he will not fare much better."

Sultan Thinker. I will immediately write to my brother Beautifier, and invite him to join in a league with me againſt him: the hope which my ambaſſador ſhall give him to make Beautifiers of all the people of Mullah, will immediately kindle his fancy. If we ſhall once have brought it ſo far as to be able to divide Mullah, we ſhould be no philoſophers if we could not ſubject Sullah likewiſe to the ſway of reaſon. My ambaſſador ſhall alſo tell him how groſsly Simple has inſulted me, by evading my invitation to the hall of Wiſdom.

SULTAN THINKER was not miſtaken in his conjectures. Simple went ſtraight to Sultan Beautifier, and complained of the deſign of his brother. But he got no redreſs: on the contrary, Beautifier held a council, to deliberate how to make the Mullahers truly poetical, and ſuſceptible of the ſublime and beautiful. But the ſame fortune which ſo often protects ſimplicity, alſo ſaved Sultan Simple here. How it happened, Mahal does not relate, as he did not witneſs it.

SULTAN Thinker's meſſage made however a ſtrong impreſſion upon Sultan Beautifier. He ſaw himſelf ſuddenly in the luſtre of a hero, and the Beautifiers found in his and their intended exploits a ſublime ſubject for poetry, and in the ſtrong and induſtrious Mullahers a new and rich ſource to feed their poetic veins and bodies. The war againſt Mullah was therefore undertaken with all the enthuſiaſm peculiar to poets and beautifiers. The Sultan ſent a proclamation in fiery and high-ſounding expreſſions among the Sullahers; it ſpread fire and flames of fancy, and every body roſe to make beautifiers of the animals of Mullah.

SULTAN SIMPLE, on his return to Mullah, related to his elders with tears, how his brothers had projected to murder him, in order to ſubjugate the Mullahers and make thinkers and beautifiers of them. Seized with an inſtantaneous paroxiſm of rage, all the Mullahers ſwore by the earth, their ſupporter, to break the pates of the Coptis and Sullahers for brooding ſuch wickedneſs, and to avenge their late ſubjugation.

SIMPLE was very ſorry matters ſhould be brought to ſuch extremes: but as much could be done with, and little ſaid to the Mullahers,

he

he put himſelf at their head. Armed with clubs and ſwords they advanced in compact bodies to the frontiers of Copha. A terrible army! Lord of Believers, ſince the Mullahers did not fear death, and knew no more of valour, than that man could not well do without it.

THE two auguſt and confederate brothers had in the mean time formed a congreſs, and ſo agreed with each other as fancy commonly does with reaſon. They felt themſelves quite lonely in each others company, entertained a reciprocal contempt for their reſpective uſages and did all they could to make this contempt degenerate into hatred, which however they prudently took care not to let break out, till one ſhould be able to do without the other.—Thinker thought of uſing the Sullahers to conquer the Mullahers, and then make the Mullahers his tools to enſlave the Sullahers. Sultan Beautifier had the ſame views with reſpect to the Copts: and thus they acted very prettily the game of confederates and allies; and it may be expected that the iſſue of the cauſe will be ſuch as it generally is among the allied Great.

WHILE the monarchs and chiefs were me-

ditating theſe ſuperb plans, the penſive Copts ſo long debated upon the noble contempt of death, and pure heroiſm, its true ſource till they ultimately diſcovered, that it was very inconſiſtent with reaſon for a man to ſuffer himſelf to be killed for a fool. Theſe ſage obſervations received additional weight, by ſeveral heads broken by the clubs of the Mullahers: and the Copts found, at this horrid ſpectacle, that thoſe clubs daſhed at once to atoms all the tables of morality, by daſhing out along with them legiſlative Reaſon. The Beautifiers ſung their intended exploits, and celebrated ſo long the fame of heroiſm and the ſublime horrors of war, till ſimilar mementos convinced them that one rude blow would put an end to the play of fancy, and to all the ſenſations of the beautiful and ſublime; and that a man muſt be a fool thus to ceaſe being a beautifier.

The day of battle was come: Sultans Thinker and Beautifier were addreſſing their armies in harrangues full of profound reaſoning and ſublimity. The armies were advancing; that of Beautifier with martial muſic, and that of Thinker with ſolemn ſtillneſs.—When the Mullahers could ſee the white of their

their combatives, they lifted their maſſy clubs, and brandiſhed their ſwords, while the Copts and the Sullahers quietly ſat down on their ſhields, and called out to the Muſlahers, "You need not give yourſelves any farther trouble to conquer us; the ſentiment of the beautiful and the laws of reaſon, make us your friends; and you may take the two fools who have brought us hither. Let Simple be our Sultan, and bury all animoſities in eternal oblivion."

RAM, aſſiſted by ſome Philoſophers and Beautifiers, ſecured the two Sultans, and ſurrendered them to Simple, who embraced them and wept bitterly. Ram ſaid to him, "Weep as much as thou likeſt, but do not forget thou art Sultan, and what treatment thy brothers had reſerved for thee."

"THEY are my brothers," replied Simple, "and why ſhould I not weep? Alas! I cannot hurt them!"

Ram. That you need not. Shut them up together, and they will torment one another enough, to rid thee very ſoon of the trouble of keeping them.

THE

THE Copts and Sullahers were satisfied, and proclaimed Sultan Simple monarch of the three empires, saying to themselves, "We have been fools under fools; Simple will restore us again to common sense."

THE Copts and Sullahers marched home, and Ram and Mahal accompanied Sultan Simple to Mullah.

HERE Ben Hafi rolled up his record for the evening.

The Caliph. This was a wicked, detestable tale! I am glad it is over. I am also glad that Simple got off so well. I hope he will be a good Sultan, because a simple prince is always better than one who is too knowing.

The Grand Vizier. This is the best tale I ever heard; and Simple was an excellent Sultan: for the simple man who suffers himself to be led by the wife, is better than the wife who trusts only to himself, and lacks experience and knowledge of mankind.

FOUR.

FOURTEENTH AND LAST EVENING.

BEN HAFI preſented himſelf in due time, and thus began the concluſion of his narrative:

MAHAL now had an ample ſubject for meditation. Ram was to him a tormenting riddle; and when he aſked him any queſtions with a view of ſolving it, all the anſwer he could obtain was a contemptuous ſmile. The Mullahers ſurpriſed him ſtill more, though he exactly found them ſuch as Ram and their own ſultan had deſcribed them. The whole country was like a well cultivated garden; contentment reigned in the cities and fields. The rough Mullaher, who ſaid nothing without doing it, and did nothing without ſaying it, appeared to him the beſt kind of man of any nation he had ſeen during his travels.—They lived for the ſake of living, without knowing whence they came, and whither they

should go. To them sun and moon were nothing but lights, the earth their supporter, heaven the reservoir of the water which was to moisten their fields. "What a pity," said Mahal, "that so good a people should not believe in God, nor know any thing of him! How strange that those who do not believe in God, should just be the best men I met with!" He secretly resolved to make the Mullahers acquainted with the Lord. The Mullahers heard him, and replied, "Stranger, the earth is our god, it supports the industrious, and leaves the lazy to starve." Mahal would not suffer this simple answer to damp his zeal for converting them; but Ram, who had been raised to the office of Grand Vizier; sent for his friend, and thus addressed him:

"MAHAL, I am informed thou art preaching God to the Mullahers; pray let it alone, else I shall be under the necessity of sending thee packing with a sound fustigation for a keep-sake. The Mullahers are animals, and good animals. What can become of men, when they cease to be that, thou hast sufficiently seen and experienced. As far as I perceive, thou art still searching for the cause

why

why men are what they are: and in my opinion, thou wilt never find it. Therefore, my good friend, I think it high time for thee to return to the mountain, and relate to God what thou haſt ſeen, heard, and experienced. He will collect from thy report, that we are a very pretty ſort of people, and that Ram is not the ſilliest amongſt us. That which thou haſt ſeen me do and execute, was a manœuvre which I played with theſe Sultans, and it will convince thee, that I have not forgotten the whipping I ſuffered by order of thy ſon-in-law at Enoch. Now I mean to make a very ſingular thing of Simple, if God will give me time for it: if he do not, it will be a thouſand pities. God will ſurely not wonder when thou telleſt him thou couldſt not diſcover the cauſe why we are as we are; we don't know it ourſelves: and ſhould he entruſt thee with his ſecret, return hither and impart it to us. But I much doubt it, and it ſeems to me to be really the grand political ſecret of Heaven. I, the Grand Vizier of the great and ſublime Sultan Simple, will give thee an eſcort who are to conduct thee as far as the mountain; and if thou doſt not play ſome of thy ſtupid tricks, thou wilt arrive there in good caſe. I ſhould be ſorry if any accident

were to happen to thee, as God would lose very much by it. Now, fare thee well!—Travelling has made thee a little more experienced, but what thou soughtest thou hast not found! Such is the case with us all in our wanderings through this perplexing world!"

MAHAL's indignation rose to the highest pitch at this audacious speech; but Ram only laughed at his scorn. The man of the mountain left the new Grand Vizier, loading him with imprecations for having prevented him from converting the Mullahers. Ram ludicrously told him at parting: "My greeting to Pooh, and to Noah thy brother-in-law."

THUS Mahal set out on his return to the old mountain, ashamed of having taken that for wisdom which he had found, shocked at all mankind, and murmuring against God, before whom he was now to appear the living testimony of the wickedness and degeneracy of those whose destruction was resolved upon. At the same time, the bold disputes of the philosophers had made some impression upon him, or confirmed him at least in his sceptic stubbornness.

ON his way back he found the Sultan dwarf very happy among his Gomers, and the Sultan

tan of Gin ſtill thinking it prudent to ſubmit his ſuperior underſtanding to the controul of the gods who ſurrounded his throne. Mahal thought it expedient to make a ſilent and quiet retreat through the dominions of thoſe two Sultans. At Irad he was informed, that Zobar died ſuddenly by the burſting of a blood-veſſel, in a fit of paſſion becauſe his vizier and treaſurer had pilfered from him too great a ſhare of his houſehold-god. Mahal's daughter Milka had ſucceeded him in the government, and the courtier of Enoch and paramour of his adulterous daughter was her Grand Vizier. What ſurpriſed Mahal moſt was, that the little baſtard ſprung from that infamous connection was to ſucceed his faithleſs mother on the throne. He found Pooh, with wonted pride, at the old taſkmaſter's, ſtill employed as a beaſt of burden, and vainly conſoling himſelf with the idea, that his ſuppoſed ſon would one day propagate the divine lineage of Gedim, and rule over both empires. The artful Milka, who had now become a goddeſs, durſt not reſcue her poor injured huſband from his bondage, becauſe he would not abdicate his godſhip. Mahal's feelings revolted at the perverſeneſs of his daughter. He waited upon her to chide her for her profligacy; when ſhe thus interrupted him: "Father, thou haſt

haſt brought me among fools; and ſince I am and muſt be among them, I am what I ought to be to them—a cunning fool. Thou hadſt beſt make no long ſtay at Irad, becauſe the people are not thy friends."

She left him, and not even his tears could move her. He went away half broken hearted; and having reached the foot of the old mountain, his eſcort took leave, and withdrew.

Mahal aſcended the mountain, and haſtened to the ſpot where the Lord had ſpoken to him. He brought nothing with him but this record, which he had laſhed over his breaſt, while his heart was trembling and palpitating under it.

He ſat down on a ſtone, beneath a cedar-tree, and, agreeably to the divine command, peruſed with ſighs and murmurs the whole of his manuſcript; after which he exclaimed: "Lord! Here I am, an unhappy fool, tired of life, confounded and overwhelmed with what I have ſeen!"

The mountain breeze gently ruſtled among the leaves of the cedar, and the voice of the Lord reſounded:

"Mah-

"MAN that coveted'ſt the wiſdom of thy fellows, what haſt thou gained by it?"

Mahal. Forgive me, Lord, if I ſpeak from the impulſe of my ſorrowful heart. My gain is, to be weary of exiſtence, to hate myſelf, and all mankind in me. Deſtroy them all (they are ripe for deſtruction), and include me among them But never create again their like, leſt thou repent it a ſecond time.

The Lord. Haſt thou found no nation, no generation, that might deſerve my mercy?

Mahal. One nation only I found better than the reſt; but this nation has quite forgotten thee, knows nothing of thy name, and lives like the beaſt of the foreſt. So great is their ignorance, that if thou deſtroy them with the others, they won't even believe they deſerve their fate. Ah! Lord, forgive my folly: why does it repent thee to have made men, and why haſt thou made them as I found them?

The Lord. What I have created, I have created; and I have created it ſuch as it is.—Having created all, I ſaid, 'It is good!' and it was good. Man was the beſt after the ſpirits of Heaven formed by my hand, and I animated him with my ſpirit in preference to all

the creatures of the earth. He was the beſt, only becauſe he could become the worſt of the created, and apply to good or to bad every thing attainable to him in my creation.

Mahal. Ah, Lord! I don't underſtand thee.

The Lord. Becauſe thy ſenſes are hardened, and thy heart is fooliſh! Thou haſt now ſeen men, but haſt thou diſcovered too, why they are ſo bad, and why thou art a fool?

Mahal. I know I was a fool to leave this mountain; but I was obliged to quit it, becauſe the reſtleſs deſire of knowledge and underſtanding was ſtronger than the reaſon or ſpirit which thou haſt allotted to my clay made body. Can I help it, that Adam, the father of us all, taſted the fruit of knowledge, and propogated in us the ardent inſtinct of knowledge, beſides the diſcernment of good and evil? I have written down all I heard, ſaw and felt. I have ſeen and experienced in myſelf, that men are bad and preſumptuous. None of them knows thee, and thoſe to whom I mentioned thy name, laughed at me and railed. I ſought after the ſource of the evil in their fleſh and in their ſpirit, and ſtill muſt

ask:

aſk: Lord, why does the fleſh rule the ſpirit? Why does the evil of the fleſh tranſmit itſelf to the ſpirit? Why muſt the ſpirit, which comes from thee, and is a part of thyſelf as thou breathedſt it into man—why muſt this ſpirit depend upon the fleſh, made of clay and doomed to putrefaction in the earth? How can man accompliſh two ſuch contradictory things, to live in the ſpirit and in the fleſh? Surely, Lord, thou muſt know all this, and thou haſt created every thing good. All I know is, that thou haſt created the whole, and that all comes from thee. I want ſenſe to comprehend the end, the key of the dark myſtery from which I ſhrink trembling. Thou haſt this key, and I dare not aſk it of thee, for thou entruſted no man with thy ſecret. Nothing therefore remains for me, but to proſtrate myſelf in the duſt from which thou haſt drawn me, to weep over myſelf and all mankind, whom thou haſt created, and of whoſe creation it repenteth thee, and then to die.

The Lord. Behold, thus I rear mankind to the ſublime end which I have choſen! This is the firſt ſtep of their infancy. I will deſtroy this generation that now fills the earth with horrors, that has forgotten my name, or miſuſes and blaſphemes it. I will extirpate them all;

all; and to the future generations I will ſend ſages, prophets and apoſtles, reveal myſelf unto them, and rear the child to manhood.

The Caliph (to himſelf). The Lord means Abraham, Moſes, Chriſt, and our ſublime Prophet.

Mabal. But what have theſe done to be born ſooner, and to commit ſin ſooner? How can they help having ſprung up in mankind's infancy, and having neither ſages nor prophets nor apoſtles to reveal thee to them?

The Lord. I was your prophet and your apoſtle, and came among you to be your teacher. I ſpoke to thee, and to all men living, the plain and ſtrong language of my fatherly exiſtence and care. My revelation ſtands living around you, in grand, ſublime and plain characters. You will not ſee it, nor hear my voice, though I appear in lightning and ſpeak in thunder. Now I muſt leave men to their obduracy; for I am a tender father, and no tormenting compellor. Therefore I ſpeak to theſe generations like a fond father to his darling children. The future generations ſhall only learn to know me and my will by the voice of man; they ſhall gueſs and believe what you have ſeen with your eyes. *Mabal,*

Mahal. Lord, forgive the blindneſs of my ſpirit, and the doubts of my heart! Behold, I cannot ſuppreſs bad thoughts, and thou juſtly calleſt me obdurate. If the men I have ſeen be ſtill in their infancy, I ſhould like to ſee thoſe that are to attain the age and maturity of manhood. What can be expected of ſuch children? I have ſeen nothing but what is bad. Thoughts and deeds of horror are their buſineſs! Man ſcorns thee, works only for himſelf and his pleaſures, and thinks the whole world, his brethren, and thyſelf, are only for his ſake. Men delight in bloodſhed and deſtruction: their glory is wickedneſs, and the extirpation of their own kind, of the earth, of its dwellings, and of the nouriſhing fields.—Wretched men govern theſe fools, and call themſelves gods; and their ſubjects not only take them as ſuch, but creep in the duſt, and ſuffer themſelves to be ſlaughtered for their pride. Why muſt man, whoſe Lord thou art, whom thou haſt created, humble himſelf and grovel under his equals?

The Lord. Such is the climax of their delirium, which could not but ſeize them the moment they forſook me. I wanted their leaders to be ſhepherds, and they themſelves made robbers of them!

Mahal.

Mahal. Why, good Lord, should this happen? Why were those permitted to be thus rampant before these?—They worship gold, and take it for their God. Why hast thou created gold? Why hast thou made things in general?

The Lord. Thus, fool, mightest thou as well ask, why I made thee.

Mahal. Lord, have pity on my poor reason! A fool I am; but I must ask thee, why?

The Lord. Thou shalt have no answer.

Mahal. Alas! Is this our fate? Let me then deplore mankind at the age of the suckling and of the hoary sire! Let me expire asking: Why hast thou made them so?

The Lord. I shut my ear to the obdurate! With thine eyes open thou wilt not see, with thy hands thou wilt not feel, nor attend to the spirit whom I have set guardian over thy heart.

Mahal. Lord, I perceive, and upbraid myself with, my folly! Yet my darkness is not dispelled. Why, Lord did thy lightning strike dead my only benefactor, the poor fisherman?

The Lord. This thou ſhalt know. My lightning ſtruck him dead, becauſe, while ye ſlept, he was mediating how he ſhould kill thee and thy companion, for the ſake of getting what little ye had about you. Often do I puniſh where I ſeem to reward, often reward where I ſeem to puniſh.

The Caliph. God is juſt!

Ben Haſi. So Mahal experienced at this moment. The Lord continued: "Thou art ſenſible of my juſtice, and ſtill thy ſpirit ſays: 'Why was my companion ſpared, he who had done ſo many evil deeds?' Thy heart is obdurate and incurable. I do not force my light upon mortals, that they may rejoice in and become worthy of it. The life of theſe generations ſhall forthwith be cut off. I will pour floods of water all over the earth; and all that is created ſhall periſh, with the animals and the creeping things. Only my ſervant Noah and his family ſhall ſurvive and be ſaved in the ark which I bade him build.

Mahal. Be not wroth, Lord againſt me. I want no birth in this ark; for I can live no more with the good and innocent, and with the wicked and depraved I will not tarry.

The

The Lord. This, and the doubts which plague thee, are the reward of fools who ſeek wiſdom among men, and not in me. Thou ſhalt not ſurvive this generation. Hide deep beneath yon rock the writing in which thou haſt ſet down the madneſs of mortal men. Be this rock thy couch; the Flood ſhall ſpare it, and thy writing ſhall not be waſhed away. Be this ſtone thy ſeat, and this cedar thy cover, till I ſhall take thy unquiet ſpirit from thee. The birds of the air ſhall feed thee, for I am merciful even unto fools, and ſupport them.—Weep over thy folly, and that of mankind, which thou ſo much deſiredſt, and againſt which my ſervant Noah warned thee. None of the children of Seth, not even Noah my ſon, ſhall approach thee, leſt thou ſhouldſt poiſon their ſimplicity. A fool thou departedſt hence, and a greater fool art thou returned: ſuch is the fruit of human knowledge, which only turns poiſon to him that attempts to diſcover what I conceal.

HERE the Lord diſappeared.

MANAL fell down and worſhipped, but his heart was obdurate; he wanted to ſearch and to know, and would not acknowledge the law of reſignation to God's will, by which we

bear

bear our fate. He remained on the rock bewailing his and mankind's folly, their crimes and presumption. His spirit fled from him, and his body was petrified, and became a lasting monument on the rock: and, though a stone, he still appears to deplore the posterity of Noah, which lives and sins on earth.

Thus, Lord of Believers, have terminated the travels of Mahal before the Flood. If their recital has afforded thee entertainment, poor Ben Hasi is sufficiently rewarded. I have omitted the account of many individual crimes and oppressions, that I might spare thy humane heart.

The Caliph. Thou hast done well; and it were better if we could forget all the bad men commit, and transmit only their good deeds to posterity. I have myself almost forgotten all thy tales, and nothing but the ball of bronze which contained the Koran before the Flood, remains fresh in my memory. Thou art a good man, and shalt remain in my palace for life. Write out this important history, and it will convince all believers and unbelievers, that we are the chosen people of God.

Ben Hasi. I thank thee, Successor of the Prophet, for thy kindness, and will study always to deserve it.

The Caliph. There muſt be ſomething more in thy ſtory than I have found in it. And I will attend to the ſalutary leſſons I may find in it after it ſhall be tranſcribed. God give me ſtrength and wiſdom to make the beſt reforms for the benefit of my ſubjects!

Ben Hafi. Permit thy ſervant to join a prayer to thine.

The Caliph. Thou committeſt a ſin by addreſſing ſuch a requeſt to me. The Caliph is not greater before Him to whom we pray, than thou; and the prayers of the poor will be heard ſooner.

BEN HAFI now laid his hands acroſs his breaſt, bent his knees, and thus prayed with a loud voice:

"LORD! Let my name be the terror of all wicked, unjuſt and hardhearted viziers and miniſters, who ſhut their ears to the cries of injured and oppreſſed humanity. Convince ſultans and princes, that they have no better friends than thoſe who poſſeſs ſpirit and courage to ſpeak the truth. They ſing the praiſe of good monarchs, and expoſe to deſerved diſgrace the weakneſs and folly of thoſe who do not reſemble them!"

The

The Caliph. Thy prayer be heard;

HERE the Caliph withdrew with Ben Hafi; and the Grand Vizier, who remained quite confounded, thus addreſſed the courtiers:

"ALL evil ſprings from the wickedneſs which has taken root in the hearts of men; they ought to be governed with a rod of iron, and flogged into ſubmiſſion. If I preſerve my charge a few weeks longer, I will convince the Caliph of what I ſay, and unmaſk this traitorous and dangerous Ben Hafi, who meditates my ruin in his Highneſs's favour."

FINIS.